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VIDEOGAMING ILLUSTRATED

February 1983

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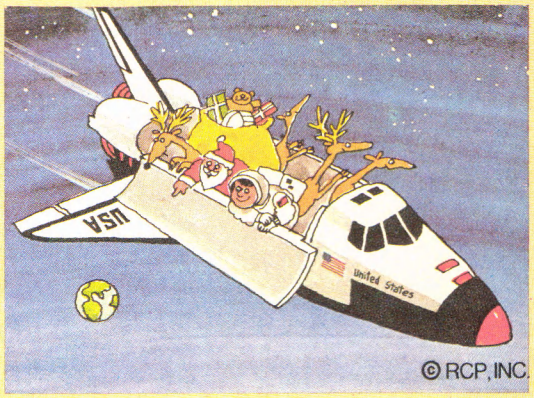
Videogaming Illustrated is published bi-monthly, in February, April, June, August, October and December by Ion International Inc., 32 Oak Ridge Road, Bethel, CT 06801. Subscription rate: 6 issues for $16.00 and 12 issues for $30.00. Canada & elsewhere $20.00 and $38.00 respectively. Second-class postage paid at Bethel, CT and at additional mailing offices. **© 1983 by Ion International Inc. All rights reserved. © under Universal International and Pan American Copyright conventions. Reproduction of editorial or pictorial content in any manner is prohibited. No responsibility can be accepted for unsolicited material.** **All editorial & subscription inquiries should be addressed to 32 Oak Ridge Rd., Bethel, CT 06801. Agency: CSA Inc., Danbury, CT 06810.**

THE COVER

The insidious Darth Vader, hero of screen and videogame, looms before a TIE Fighter from *Star Wars*. This painting is the work of Vincent DiFate, making a return engagement after his masterful rendering of ET on the cover of our last issue.

The keyboard



STICKS AND STONES

You may have noticed that *Videogaming Illustrated* is not the only videogames magazine on the market. There were, at last count, five or six regular titles, plus sundry one-shots such as the humor magazine mentioned in this issue's *Eye On.*

The racks will continue to bulge with new titles, *de rigueur* with any booming industry. When the public has had a chance to sample them all, it'll decide which three or four it likes the best and send the others out to pasture.

We keep abreast of all the titles in our field, but the one which stands as our all-time favorite is the magazine which ran a bombastic full-page advertisement to announce its arrival. The recent *pronunciamiento* was worded thusly:

"Now ... a magazine about video and computer games that's as much fun to read as the games are to play (offering) the best graphics and best writing in an irresistable format that is new, different and better than anything else available today."

Other publishers with whom we spoke were less-than-enthused by the ad, concerned that such a godsend would put the rest of us out of business. However, we calmly pointed out that any company which would misspell a prominent word in an important, proclamation ("irresistible," in case you didn't notice) is not likely to burn the midnight oil checking and double-checking what goes between their covers.

It was suggested to us that we were being a *little* too harsh.

Well, maybe it was all that advertising bluster which got to us. No doubt we took it personally when the infractor casually implied that everything else on the market was useless clutter, dismissing the efforts of the dozens of professionals on the staff of *Videogaming Illustrated* and other publications who pioneered this field in the first place.

(And in case you're wondering who the careless braggart was, all we'll let fall is that the magazine has the *longest* title in the business — and that every word in that title is spelled correctly.)

However, one very useful result of the advertisement was that it started us thinking about the competition. We are obviously different than the other magazines on the market, and that prompted us to put forth a few policy statements about *why* this publication is different.

Our approach to videogames is not and never will be of the "gosh-wow" school. That kind of reportage is legitimate and has its place, but we feel that doting upon flash and color ultimately inhibits the growth of the industry. We'll tell you how to conquer *Kangaroo* and *Atlantis,* but that's not all we'll do.

Over the past few years, society has witnessed two concurrent wonders: the complete and astonishing acceptance of complex new hardware, the videogame (read: computer), and the stimulation of countless imaginations through software. That kind of two-sided rapport has happened before, as in the case of movies, radio, and television, but never so swiftly nor with such extraordinary penetration at all levels of our society.

Yet, many people still consider videogames as a fad and regard video game players as glassy-eyed rubes.

When we started producing the first issue of this magazine nearly a year ago, we were told by the people who conducted our surveys and the pundits who "knew the field" that readers wouldn't go for a serious, adult publication about videogames.

"Write for *Vidiots,* " we were told. "You've got to be mental candy, just like the games."

We did not view our audience as such and would not publish a magazine for that stereotype. Needless to say, the sales success of *Videogaming Illustrated* has therefore been extremely rewarding.

Our goal, now as when we began, is to keep you informed about the ever-changing technology, to celebrate the scientists and the artists both, to laud the innovators and to keel-haul the slackers, to inform and to analyze not only the games but the industry, present and future.

In short, it's our ambition to make *Videogaming Illustrated* informative and interesting — not "irresistible," or even "irresistable." We're not an after shave lotion.

Fun to read. We hope so.

The best writing and graphics? Even unamimous approval is still subjective.

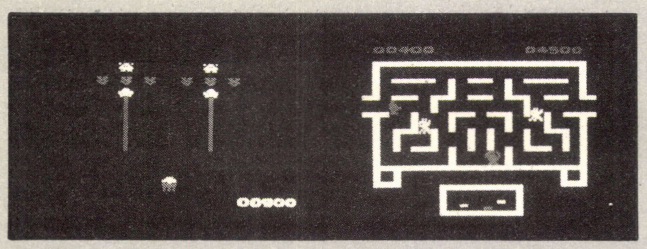
Better than anything else available today? That's for you and Joseph Pulitzer to determine.

All *we* can say is "we'll try." ▲

Jeff Rovin
Editor-in-chief

eye on

TROUBLE FOR ASTROCADE



***The screens for CBS's home videogame versions of* The Wizard of Wor *and* Gorf.**

Since its inception, Astrocade has had difficulty selling its hardware in a market dominated by Atari, Intellivision, Odyssey and, now, ColecoVision.

As if things weren't tough enough, their best cartridge is about to be battered by a subsidiary of media giant CBS.

Last issue, we reported on the confusion which arose from both Astrocade and the CBS videogame unit having obtained licenses to produce home versions of the popular Bally arcade attraction *The Wizard of Wor.*

The object in both games is to pass through various labyrinths and use your laser pistol to destroy a variety of monsters.

As it turns out, the license for *The Wizard of Wor* initially went to Astrocade as part of the deal in which Bally unloaded its stagnating home division to an outside company, Astrovision, which subsequently changed its name to Astrocade.

However, that license is about to expire. Thus, Bally was free to sell the home videogame rights to CBS, whose Gabriel toy division is presently shipping Atari-compatible cartridges to stores nation-wide.

Astrocade was counting very heavily on its version of *The Wizard of Wor, The Incredible Wizard,* to attract buyers to its hardware. That's no longer an attraction, which may well be a numbing commercial blow to Astrocade.

Already, Astrocade is behind in the release of new cartridges; the company's future has not been enhanced by CBS's move into its precious Wor zone.

Ironically, the Astrocade game offers slightly superior graphics and sound effects due to the comparative sophistication of its console. However, gameplay is otherwise the same, and the strategies outlined in detail in our last issue apply to the CBS cartridge.

CBS has also just released its home version of the Bally arcade game *Gorf,* the multi-mission space game in which you must repel robot attacks, destroy laser ships, and blast torpedo-firing fighters, each of which is sent your way courtesy of the Gorfian Empire.

CBS plans to release Intellivision editions of these games early next year, and is exploring the possibility of producing versions for both Odyssey and ColecoVision consoles.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

As if Astrocade and its fellow videogame companies didn't have enough to worry about in terms of competition, here are reports on the latest software manufacturers to enter the videogame fray.

MILTON BRADLEY

We suspected something was up when this game and toy titan started buying subscriptions to our magazine. Phoning the corporate office, we were informed that Milton Bradley recently acquired General Consumer Electronics Corporation of Santa Monica, CA. GCE is headed by a former executive from Mattel Electronics.

Not only has Milton Bradley begun releasing games, they've given consumers yet another console: Vectrex. The unit went on sale last month.

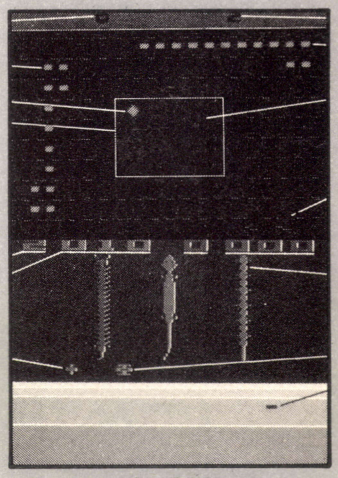
In a related development, Milton Bradley reached an agreement with Apple Computers to develop language arts and math programs for junior high school students. Apple will be providing technical expertise and equipment on which to develop the software, which will then be manufactured and marketed by Milton Bradley.

DATA AGE

This new company began distributing its Atari-compatible videogames in October. The first five releases were:

SSSnake, in which you must overcome pterodactyls, trachodons, and other dinosaurs in order to reach an ancient fortress. There, deadly snakes try to invade your hiding place, snakes which you must cut down to size.

Encounter at L-5, not the game we suggested in last issue's *You Read It Here First,* but a battle between space colonists and invaders from the Megalon Solar System. (Never mind that Data Age places the human colony beyond the orbit of the moon, when L-5 is a point *between* the earth and the moon. It's easy to become disoriented in space.)



Screens for* SSSnake *and* Bugs, *new Atari-compatible games from Data Age.

Bugs, a struggle between astronauts exploring subterranean hives on an alien world and the creeping monsters which dwell therein — including the defense-penetrating Super-Drones.

Warplock, more star wars, this time between your space cruiser and intergalactic pirates.

Airlock, a clever variation of the multi-level game popularized by *Donkey Kong,* as the captain of a disabled submarine must retrieve keys to free the crew before the craft takes on too much

eye on

***A Data Age designer and the original concept for* Megalon Invasion, *which later became* Encounter at L-5.**

water; all the while, the officer must dodge torpedos which have come loose from their bays.

THE GREAT GAME COMPANY

This new company's lineup won't hit the stores until next spring, but it's an unusual list of games indeed.

The Great Game Company was formed by partners of I.J.E. Distributing Company, owners of Kid Stuff Records, and their releases will be configured for the Atari home unit (the popular 2600 as opposed to the recent 5200 or 400 and 800 computers).

What's unusual about this new firm is the titles they will be releasing: all will be based on television game shows! The first half-dozen titles are going to be *Family Feud, Jeopardy, Password, Tic-Tac-Dough, The Joker's Wild,* and *Wheel of Fortune.*

WIZARD VIDEO

The founders of this company wish to remain anonymous, and understandably so: they're going after the adult market. Soon to join the X-rated videogames *Custer's Revenge, Bachelor Party,* and *Beat 'em and Eat 'em* from Mystique are these from Wizard: *Flesh Gordon* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.*

Flesh Gordon is based on the sexually explicit parody released in 1974. In this game, you must evade Emperor Wang, mince past Prince Precious and, finding Dale Ardor, have your way with her.

Gameplay in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* is not so much erotic as psychotic: you are a mass murderer who chases victims through mazes, dismembering them once they are caught.

(We were asked — make that begged — by the designer of these Atari-compatible cartridges not to reveal his/her name. We won't. Suffice to say you read about this person in our pages last issue. Hint: it wasn't the stock analyst who panned *Tron.*)

What's interesting about the debut of all these new game companies is that, thusfar, we have not seen any *casualties.*

How the Davids like Apollo and Spectravision, with their lengthy head-start, will fare against the Goliaths like CBS and Milton Bradley will be one of the most fascinating stories of the entire videogame phenomenon.

Watch this space for any and all developments!

BUT IS IT LITERATURE?

Cracked Magazine is one of the better humor magazines on the market, not a singularly impressive achievement given such inane competition as *Sick, Crazy,* and *Wacko.*

Nonetheless, *Cracked* recently published an edition devoted entirely to the lampooning of videogames, and it was quite a gem.

Our favorite was the spoof of the George Plimpton commercials comparing Intellivision to Atari. In this case, it was Dumbovision vs. Crackedvision, with the latter clearly the superior system.

The cover of* Cracked's *videogame edition.

For instance:

Dumbovision offered the oh, so shallow *Olympics,* while Crackedvision served up *Olympic Boycott.* Mere *Tennis* from Dumbovision could not compete with exciting *Tantrum-Throwing* from Crackedvision, while only the latter offered such options as "Shutting Howard Cosell's Mouth" and "Exiting the Stadium Parking Lot After the Big Game."

Several months ago we told you how *Mad* Magazine was losing readers to videogames: as the twenty year old *Cracked* has learned, if you can't beat 'em . . .

ON A HIGHER PLANE . . .

If you've been following the comic page in your local newspaper, you'll have noticed a character called The Eliminator appearing in the popular *Funky Winkerbean* strip.

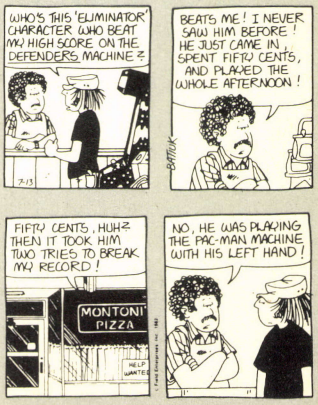
(If your paper doesn't *carry* this strip, complain at once: *Funky Winkerbean* is one of the funniest and most inventive comics extant.)

The Eliminator is an eleven and one-half year old kid who identifies himself as "the best videogames player in the galaxy," and that he is, as a quick look at these sample strips will reveal.

This rather unusual character also has the capacity to warp, physically, into hyperspace. For the record, behind his *nom de guerre* the character is called Donald.

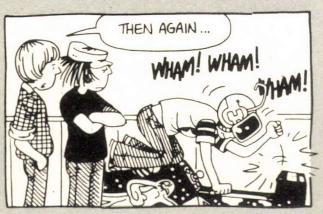
The Eliminator was inspired by a real-life character whom the strip's artist-writer Tom Batiuk met earlier this year. "I was waiting to use a videogame, and this kid in front of me was just racking up incredible scores. When he was finally finished, he turned to me and said 'Beat *that,*' which I could never have come close to doing."

Funky Winkerbean has been running since March of 1972. Batiuk had recently graduated from Kent State and was teaching when he developed a concept which was fundamentally Archie



for grownups.
Batiuk describes Funky himself as the strip's straight man, serving as stability for the rather unusual cast of characters in his orbit.

"The most unusual thing about him is his name," Batiuk asserts. "When he walks up to someone and says, 'Hi, I'm Funky,' it sounds like he's bragging."



Batiuk no longer teaches, though he does serve as a substitute art teacher and visits classes several times a month to sketch the kids in action. Both are necessary, he insists, to remain in touch with today's youth.

The Eliminator, introduced this past summer, has proved to be an asset to the strip both commercially and aesthetically.

Videogaming Illustrated was so impressed with the character — only slightly less than the precocious little sot is impressed with himself — that we asked Batiuk to make him a regular in *our* pages. The Eliminator's magazine debut is in this issue's *Conquering: Kangaroo.*

DUCK, DONALD

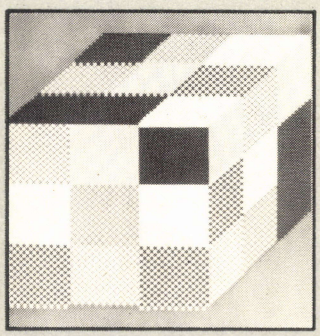
The Eliminator may be a videogame wizard where reflex games are concerned, but how would he do on the more intellectual programs, we wonder.

Typical of the more thought-inducing games entering the marketplace are Radio Shack's *Color Cubes Program Pak.* The company may not be able to spell, but they produce impressive games.

This particular item was developed for their TRS-80 computer. The cube is made up of twenty-seven smaller "cubies" in six different colors.

The object of the game, ala Mr. Rubik's puzzler et al, is to unscramble the cube via a series of horizontal and vertical twists and turns.

Most impressive is the fact that the computer keeps track of a player's last 255 moves. This allows the videogamer to retrace or analyze what she or he has done, backtracking and taking a fresh start from any point if necessary.



The Radio Shack Cube.

The computer also allows the player to input a cube configuration of his/her own selection, or to generate a random pattern.

For competitive players, the computer keeps a running time on the progress of each.

SIMULATIONS? PSHAW!

***The cockpit and upright versions of Sega's* Subroc-3D.**

The Cube program is a lot of fun, but there's one thing it *can't* give you: that hands-on feel.

In October, Sega took the first step in remedying that: the company released the first genuine 3-D videogame.

If you haven't yet played it, *Subroc-3D* is a marvel.

The game works on fundamentally the same principle as 3-D movies. Your eyes see in three dimensions normally because each has a slightly different perspective of the same object.

In order to achieve that in a film or videogame, the two viewpoints are superimposed. Special glasses are worn to filter the images; the lenses allow only one image to pass to each eye.

It isn't necessary to don glasses to play *Subroc-3D:* in both the upright and cockpit models, the lenses are cleverly disguised as a periscope through which the player must peer.

Though the player is utterly unaware of it, the images for the left and right eyes are *not* onscreen at the same time: a special shutter flashes thirty images each second, alternatively displaying the left and right images. This occurs so rapidly that, to the eye, the pictures appear to be superimposed thus achieving the three dimensional effect.

The object of the game is for the player to skim a Subroc craft over the ocean while battling seagoing vessels, or else to rise into the stratosphere for high-flying battles against enemy spaceships.

The action carries the player through day, twilight, and evening.

Whatever the time of day, the realism of *Subroc-3D* is extraordinary. The sense of depth is mesmerizing, enhanced by spectacular stereophonic sound effects.

If *Subroc-3D* has a draw-

back, it's the fact that so much computer memory was used to create the various modes of play as well as the dual imaging that the graphics themselves tend to be a little sparse at times. A somewhat less ambitious game with more attention to graphic detail might be advisable. Until then, *Subroc-3D* is a breathtaking first step on the road to more participatory entertainment.

SPEAKING OF WHICH . . .

If you yearn for an enhanced sense of participation in audio-visual entertainment, then Perceptronics has a state-of-the-art gem: the LaserTour.

Created especially for the Neiman-Marcus stores, LaserTour is a computer-run system which allows you to pedal through valley and fen, through city and on a variety of adventures, getting bagfuls of exercise without ever leaving your home.

LaserTour consists of: a videodisc player, a forty-five inch rear-screen projection TV, and a bicycle with a computer control panel.

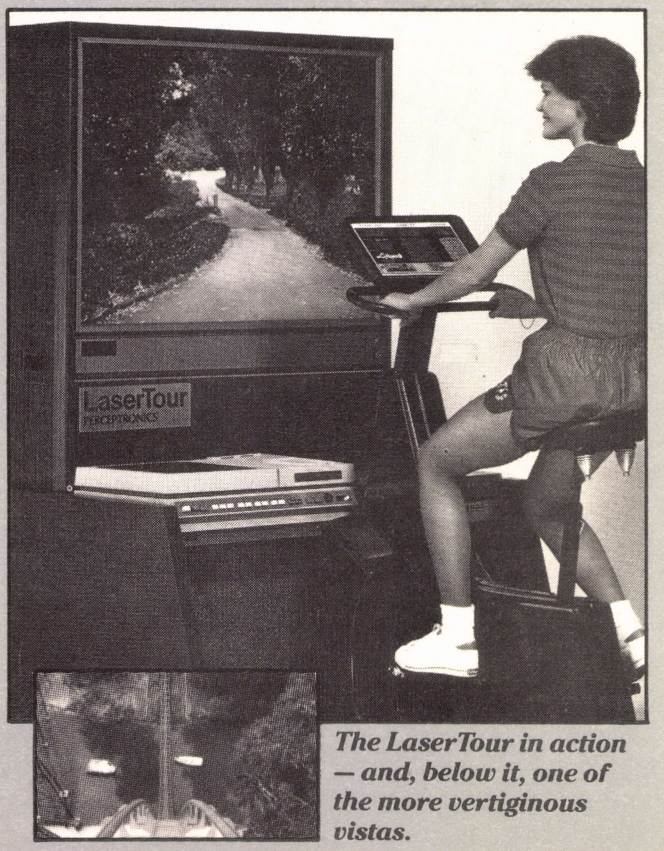
The faster you pedal, the more quickly you whip through the landscape. From time to time, road signs offer you a choice of destinations: press a button on the bicycle's panel and you can vary your course as the mood strikes you.

Among the selections of scenery are Beverly Hills, Southern California canyons and hills, or some bizarre surprises — such as the one pictured below.

Each disc offers you a two hour tour.

The sense of participation is, in a word, awesome. It had better be: the price tag is twenty thousand dollars.

Now, if someone could only get Sega and Perceptronics together we would have ourselves some kind of videogame experiences . . .



The LaserTour in action — and, below it, one of the more vertiginous vistas.

BACK AT THE RANCH . . .

So much for flights of extravagance. Back at the ole videogame console, there are sundry and fascinating developments.

All that talk last issue about stock analysts predicting gloom for the videogame industry has not, apparently, caused Parker Brothers to lose any sleep.

The General Mills subsidiary said recently that they expected to generate in excess of two hundred million dollars worth of retail sales for its Atari-compatible software over the next two years.

This figure is based on the release of twenty titles by the end of 1984.

Parker Brothers certainly has had a phenomenal start with *The Empire Strikes Back* videogame: released in June, it has achieved over thirty million dollars in retail sales. That makes it one of the top-grossing home videogames in history.

The other Parker Brothers videogames currently in release are *Frogger, Amidar,* and *Spiderman.* In addition to *Jedi Arena,* covered elsewhere in this issue, next month you'll be able to buy *Super Cobra,* with *Reactor* scheduled for the spring.

APOLLO'S FACE-LIFT

Apollo is doing extremely well for a small company amidst the titans, but President Pat Roper isn't resting on his laurels.

The Texas-based company has a total of thirteen games on the market, all of them bearing the company's new logo and, in the case of older games like *Space Cavern,* new package art.

"Increasingly limited shelf space and overall competition in the marketplace has created a need for our games packaging to be truly distinctive and yet to reflect a family look," Roper said. At the same time, he wanted "a sophisticated image of the company to reflect the innovative, state-of-the-art games we are known for making."

The company's new logo features their name pierced by a lightning bolt.

More interesting news from the point of view of the consumer is that Apollo is currently producing Intellivision-compatible versions of *Space Cavern* and *Shark Attack,* and are working on editions for the Odyssey 2 console.

Continued on page 68

The next logical step

by Ben Bova

"I don't really see where this problem has anything to do with me," the CIA man said. "And, frankly, there are a lot of more important things I could be doing."

Ford, the physicist, glanced at General LeRoy. The general had that quizzical expression on his face, the look that meant he was about to do something decisive.

"Would you like to see the problem firsthand?" the general asked, innocently.

The CIA man took a quick look at his wrist watch, "Okay, if it doesn't take too long. It's late enough already."

"It won't take very long, will it, Ford?" the general said, getting out of his chair.

"Not very long," Ford agreed. "Only a lifetime."

The CIA man grunted as they went to the doorway and left the general's office. Going down the dark, deserted hallway, their footsteps echoed hollowly.

"I can't overemphasize the seriousness of the problem," General LeRoy said to the CIA man, "Eight ranking members of the General Staff have either resigned their commissions or gone straight to the violent ward after just one session with the computer."

The CIA man scowled. "Is this area Secure?"

General LeRoy's face turned red. "This entire building is as Secure as any edifice in the Free World, mister. And it's empty. We're the only living people inside here at this hour. I'm not taking any chances."

"Just want to be sure."

"Perhaps if I explain the computer a little more," Ford

said, changing the subject, "you'll know what to expect."

"Good idea," said the man from CIA.

"We told you that this is the most modern, most complex and delicate computer in the world ... nothing like it has ever been attempted before — anywhere."

"I know that They don't have anything like it," the CIA man agreed.

"And you also know, I suppose, that it was built to simulate actual war situations. We fight wars in this computer ... wars with missiles and bombs and gas. Real wars, complete down to the tiniest detail. The computer tells us what will actually happen to every missile, every city, every man ... who dies, how many planes are lost, how many trucks will fail to start on a cold morning, whether a battle is won or lost ..."

General LeRoy interrupted. "The computer runs these analyses for both sides, so we can see what's happening to Them, too."

The CIA man gestured impatiently. "War-games simulations aren't new. You've been doing them for years."

"Yes, but this machine is different," Ford pointed out. "It not only gives a much more detailed war game. It's the next logical step in the development of machine-simulated war games." He hesitated dramatically.

"Well, what is it?"

"We've added a variation of the electroencephalograph ..."

The CIA man stopped walking. "The electro-what?"

"Electroencephalograph. You know, a recording device that reads the electrical patterns of your brain. Like the electrocardiograph."

"Oh."

"But you see, we've given the EEG a reverse twist. Instead of using a machine that makes a recording of the brain's electrical wave output, we've developed a device that will take the computer's readout tapes and turn them into electrical patterns that are put *into* your brain!"

"I don't get it."

General LeRoy took over. "You sit at the machine's control console. A helmet is placed over your head. You set the machine in operation. You *see* the results."

"Yes," Ford went on. "Instead of reading rows of figures from the computer's printer ... you actually see the war being fought. Complete visual and auditory hallucinations. You can watch the progress of the battles, and as you change strategy and tactics you can see the results before your eyes."

"The idea, originally, was to make it easier for the General Staff to visualize strategic situations," General LeRoy said.

"But every one who's used the machine has either resigned his commission or gone insane," Ford added.

The CIA man cocked an eye at LeRoy. "You've used the computer."

"Correct."

"And you have neither resigned nor cracked up."

General LeRoy nodded. "I called you in."

Before the CIA man could comment, Ford said, "The computer's right inside this doorway. Let's get this over with while the building is still empty."

They stepped in. The physicist and the general showed the CIA man through the room-filling rows of massive consoles.

They showed him finally to a small desk, studded with control buttons and dials. The single spotlight above the desk lit it brilliantly, in harsh contrast to the semidarkness of the rest of the room.

"Since you've never run the computer before," Ford said, "General LeRoy will do the controlling. You just sit and watch what happens."

The general sat in one of the well-padded chairs and donned a grotesque headgear that was connected to the desk by a half-dozen wires. The CIA man took his chair, slowly.

When they put one of the bulky helmets on him, he looked up at them, squinting a little in the bright light. "This ... this isn't going to ... well, do me any damage, is it?"

"My goodness no," Ford said. "You mean mentally? No, of course not. You're not on the General Staff, so it shouldn't ... it won't ... affect you the way it did the others. Their reaction had nothing to do with the computer *per se* ..."

"Several civilians have used the computer with no ill effects," General LeRoy said. "Ford has used it many times."

The CIA man nodded, and they closed the transparent visor over his face. He sat there and watched General LeRoy press a series of buttons, then turn a dial.

"Can you hear me?" The general's voice came muffled through the helmet.

"Yes," he said.

"All right. Here we go. You're familiar with Situation One-Two-One? That's what we're going to be seeing."

Situation One-Two-One was a standard war game. The CIA man was well acquainted with it. He watched the general flip a switch, then sit back and fold his arms over his chest. A row of lights on the desk console began blinking on and off, one, two, three ... down to the end of the row, then back to the beginning again, on and off, on and off ...

And then, somehow, he could see it!

He was poised, incredibly, somewhere in space, and he could see it all in a funny, blurry-double-sighted, dreamlike way. He seemed to be seeing several pictures and hearing many voices, all at once. It was all mixed up, and yet it made a weird kind of sense.

For a panicked instant he wanted to rip the helmet off his head. *It's only an illusion,* he told himself, forcing calm on his unwilling nerves. *Only an illusion.*

But it seemed strangely real.

He was watching the Gulf of Mexico. He could see Florida off to his right, ,and the arching coast of the southeastern United States. He could even make out the Rio Grande River.

Situation One-Two-One started, he remembered, with the discovery of missile-bearing Enemy submarines in the Gulf. Even as he watched the whole area — as though perched on a satellite — he could see, underwater and close-up, the menacing shadowy figure of a submarine gliding through the crystal-blue sea.

He was, too, a patrol plane as it spotted the submarine and sent an urgent radio warning.

The underwater picture dissolved in a bewildering burst of bubbles. A missile had been launched. Within seconds, another burst — this time a nuclear depth charge — utterly destroyed the submarine.

It was confusing. He was everyplace at once. The details were overpowering, but the total picture was agonizingly clear.

Six submarines fired missiles from the Gulf of Mexico. Four were immediately sunk, but too late. New Orleans, St. Louis and three Air Force bases were obliterated by hydrogen-fusion warheads.

The CIA man was familiar with the opening stages of the war. The first missile fired at the United States was the signal for whole fleets of missiles and bombers to launch themselves at the Enemy. It was confusing to see the world at once; at times he could not tell if the fireball and mushroom cloud was over Chicago or Shanghai, New York or Novosibersk, Baltimore or Budapest.

It did not make much difference, really. They all got it in the first few hours of the war; as did London and Moscow, Washington and Peking, Detroit and Delhi, and many, many more.

The defensive systems on all sides seemed to operate well, except that there were never enough antimissiles. Defensive systems were expensive compared to attack rockets. It was cheaper to build a deterrent than to defend against it.

The missiles flashed up from submarines and railway cars, from underground silos and stratospheric jets; secret ones fired off automatically when a certain airbase command-post ceased beaming out a restraining radio signal. The defensive systems were simply overloaded. And when the bombs ran out, the missiles carried dust and germs and gas. On and on. For six days and six firelit nights. Launch, boost, coast, reenter, death.

And now it was over, the CIA man thought. The missiles were all gone. The airplanes were exhausted. The nations that had built the weapons no longer existed. By all the rules he knew of, the war should have been ended.

Yet the fighting did not end. The machine knew better. There were still many ways to kill an enemy. Time-tested ways. There were armies fighting in four continents, armies that had marched overland, or splashed ashore from the sea, or dropped out of the skies.

Incredibly, the war went on. When the tanks ran out of gas, and the flame throwers became useless, and even the prosaic artillery pieces had no more rounds to fire, there were still simple guns and even simpler bayonets and swords.

The proud armies, the descendants of the Alexanders and Caesars and Timujins and Wellingtons and Grants and Rommels, relived their evolution in reverse.

The war went on. Slowly, inevitably, the armies split apart into smaller and smaller units, until the tortured countryside that so recently had felt the impact of nuclear war once again knew the tread of bands of armed marauders. The tiny savage groups, stranded in alien lands, far from the homes and families that they knew to be destroyed, carried on a mockery of war, lived off the land, fought their own countrymen if the occasion suited, and revived the ancient terror of hand-wielded, personal, one-head-at-a-time killing.

The CIA man watched the world disintegrate. Death was an individual business now, and none the better for no longer being mass-produced. In agonized fascination he saw the myriad ways in which a man might die. Murder was only one of them. Radiation, disease, toxic gases that lingered and drifted on the once-innocent winds, and — finally — the most efficient destroyer of them all: starvation.

Three billion people (give or take a meaningless hundred-million) lived on planet Earth when the war began. Now, with the tenuous thread of civilization burned away, most of those who were not killed by the fighting itself succumbed, inexorably, to starvation.

Not everyone died, of course. Life went on. Some were lucky.

A long darkness settled on the world. Life went on for a few, a pitiful few, a bitter, hateful, suspicious, savage few. Cities became pestholes. Books became fuel. Knowledge died. Civilization was completely gone from the planet Earth.

The helmet was lifted slowly off his head. The CIA man found that he was too weak to raise his arms and help. He was shivering and damp with perspiration.

"Now you see," Ford said quietly, "why the military men cracked up when they used the computer."

General LeRoy, even, was pale. "How can a man with any conscience at all direct a military operation when he knows that *that* will be the consequence?"

The CIA man struck up a cigarette and pulled hard on it. He exhaled sharply. "Are all the war games ... like that? Every plan?"

"Some are worse," Ford said. "We picked an average one for you. Even some of the 'brushfire' games get out of hand and end up like that."

"So ... what do you intend to do? Why did you call me in? What can *I* do?"

"You're with CIA," the general said. "Don't you handle espionage?"

"Yes, but what's that got to do with it?"

The general looked at him. "It seems to me that the next logical step is to make damned certain that *They* get the plans to this computer ... and fast!"▲

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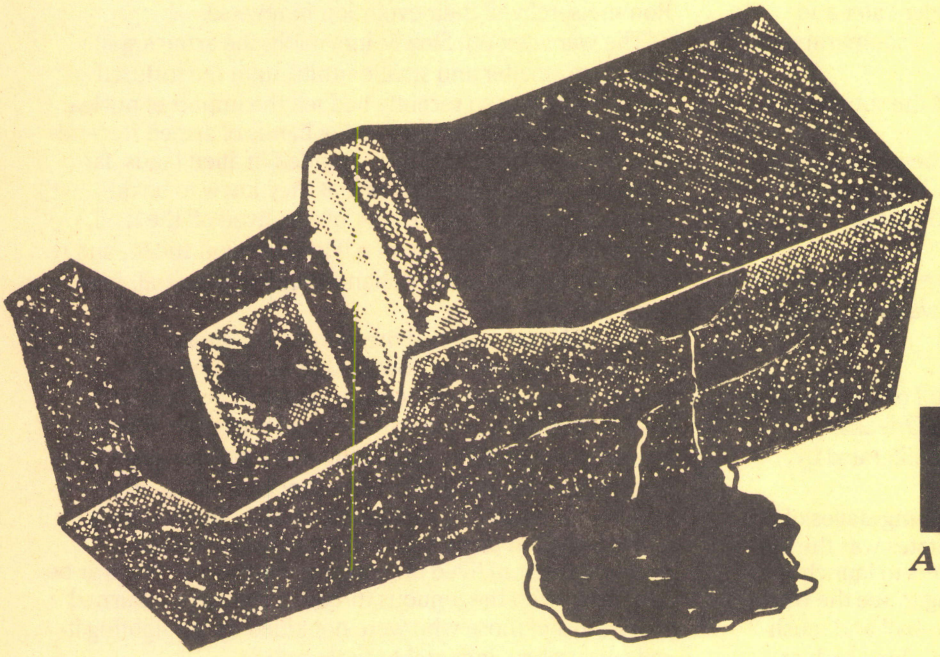


USER DEADLY

A Video Game of Murder

by Richard Meyers

Part One "DEFENDER"

I was all right until the machine started bleeding.

I was confused, I was depressed, I was paranoid, and I was a bit hot under the collar, but I could handle that. The thing I couldn't understand was what had been going on from the first moment we stepped into the arcade. I had shoved the quarter into the slot and stepped aside. The little blue whozis hit the massive red whatsis and I was lost.

They weren't doing too flaming well, either. As soon as the whozis had hit the whatsis, the whatsis had gone all to pieces — accompanied by the distant noise of an unearthly explosion as well as the all-too-close sound of chortling.

I had never heard my ten year old daughter chortle before and I was somewhat taken aback, I can tell you. Giggle, snicker, even guffaw, yes; never chortle. It was a deep, low, smug sound, as if Mercedes McCambridge had invaded her body for a split second.

Never for an instant did I expect her head to rotate and green pea soup to spew from her mouth, however. It wouldn't have surprised me, the skull turning. Except that it would've meant pulling her eyes from the machine's viewscreen. As for the noxious bile, it would have obstructed her view. She was much too intent on playing the videogame to allow anything, let alone a raspy-voiced, barely-known actress, to possess her body and soul.

I, on the other hand, could have used the interruption. There's nothing quite so lonely as finding yourself in the middle of a throng and being unable and unwilling, perhaps incapable of joining them. In my case, it was a lot of the former, with a little of the latter.

I could have wandered away from my daughter's side. She had already made it quite clear that she couldn't play well with me crowding her. I had only wanted to see how the game worked and how she did on it. Now the only way I could gauge her progress was to watch her little body jerk and listen to the sounds of delightful destruction.

I could have wandered away, I suppose, had it not been for the myriad denizens of the arcade crowded into a room adjoining the fast food establishment. Not only were they intent on joysticking the various games into submission and scarfing down mounds of Hebrew National hot dogs — but every once and awhile I thought I saw some of the kids and a few guys who had to be my age eyeing Audrey the same way they looked at the change slots of the machines and the grease spitting grill of the restaurant.

I'm not overly protective. I'm just a realist. After all, this was beautiful downtown Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and we were two of a very few clean cut people in the place as the sun neared setting in the West. And at least one of us looked distinctly uncomfortable.

So I didn't feel right about leaving Audrey's side, but even if I did, I'm not sure I'd know what to do with myself. There were plenty of other games, but I felt certain that the second I stuck my own quarter into any slot, I would draw a crowd of impatient pre-teen video-scarred vets, all sneer-

Continued on page 63

SwordQuest

Innovation or Enervation?

The scene is a murky, mist-shrouded enclosure. Above are eerie lights that are at once blinding and muted. Below is a sand-strewn floor. Upon it are etched the signs of the zodiac in such a way as to create a circle. In the middle of the circle is a strange symbol.

A runic code? Not quite.

The symbol consists of three vertical bars. The central bar is straight. The two bars that sandwich it are curved, flaring out at the base. Beneath this symbol are five letters. They spell a word that has taken on a quasi-mythical stature.

They spell the word "Atari."

And just where does this scene take place? On some imaginary isle of a videogame player's dream? In the mind of a great fantasy filmmaker? On the grounds of some multi-million dollar amusement park?

No. This enclosure and five others could be found on the ballroom floor of the palatial Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City.

The Sunnyvale, CA company put together its own sword and sorcery show to introduce the press to its newest and most unusual home videogame project: *SwordQuest.*

SwordQuest is both the title and the intent of the combination videogame, comic book, contest. And the formal introduction of the game began in the astrologically decorated room.

The guests were induced by an Atari guide to stand near their own birth sign, just as hidden speakers began pumping out the prerecorded dialogue of two actors.

"You may call us Mentorr and Mentarra," they intone. "We would tell you of your destiny — a destiny that will take you across four worlds. A world of Earth Spirits. A world of Fire. A world of Water Sprites. And lastly, a world of Air.

"On each world you will encounter a challenge — perhaps more than one. Surmounting these challenges will make you stronger, wiser, more courageous and, in the end, will give you your heart's desire."

Swordquest is more than a game. It is also a comic book created by the genre's masters.

It *sounded* corny, like something justifiably left on the cutting room floor when they were making *Hercules Unchained.* But looking past the melodrama, Atari had the makings of an interesting adventure project.

The Waldorf-Astoria tour continued. From the zodiac room, reporters were herded to an area bordered by screens. Each wall suddenly came alive with drawings and photos as the prerecorded actors detailed the "*SwordQuest* Challenge".

SwordQuest, you see, isn't a game at all. It's a blanket title for four homevideogames. The object of these games isn't anything as mundane as rescuing Donkey Kong from Mario or blowing up Pookas with an air pump. Atari is literally giving home players the chance to go for the gold.

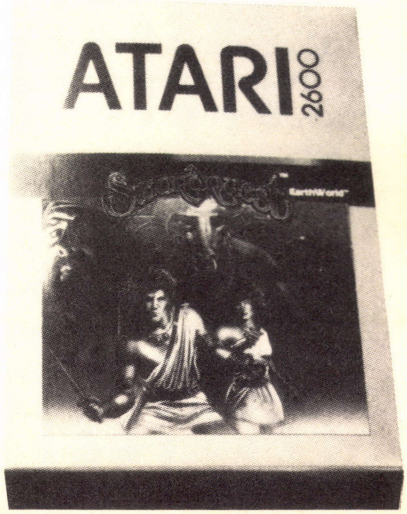
Four cartridges are being released at six month intervals. Instead of gathering points, five clues must be found — clues which are hidden in the games and in the comic books which come packaged with them.

The comic books are being written by Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway, two comparatively literate figures in the comic book field. They're being published by DC Comics and packaged with the games; DC, as it happens, is owned by Warner Communications, the parent company of Atari.

The comic books flesh-out the videogame adventure. In the printed scenario, Tara and Torr are seeking vengeance against King Tyrannus and the wizard Konjuro for having framed their parents, subsequently killing them as traitors. (Never mind that the potentate and his mage should be slain for having such hackneyed names; maybe in another adventure).

The player, of course, is enacting the mission vicariously, but there *is* a tangible reward: an aggregate of $150,000 worth of prizes.

If the player is sly enough to ferret the clues from the six red herrings in each game, that person will be flown at Atari's expense to the company's headquarters to play against other medieval



AMAZING NEW CANCER OPERATION UNVEILED.

The doctor doesn't cut out anything. You cut out cigarettes.

This simple surgery is the surest way to save you from lung cancer. And the American Cancer Society will help you perform it.

We have free clinics to help you quit smoking. So, before you smoke another cigarette, call the A.C.S. office nearest you.

And don't put it off. The longer you keep smoking, the sooner it can kill you.

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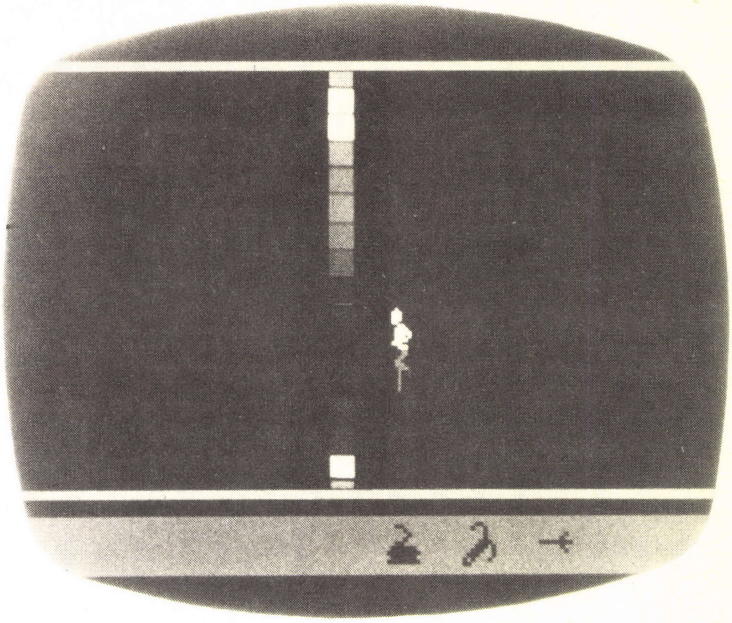


In order to use your brain to solve the puzzle, you have to use your reflexes first. This is just one test of skill.

detectives for the various prizes.

First up is *EarthWorld,* which is now on-sale. The reward for the victor of the hunt is a gold medallion worth $25,000. Waiting in the wings is *FireWorld,* which comes complete with *its* own $25,000 platinum chalice prize, followed by *WaterWorld* which has as a reward a $25,000 gem-studded crown, and *AirWorld* which offers a $25,000, eighteen carat golden box covered with emeralds and rubies.

That only accounts for $100,000, you say ...

Well, Atari figures that there will be four different winners, one for each game. This quartet will face off against each other for the really big booty: the $50,000 Sword of Ultimate Sorcery.

So much for those who say that playing videogames doesn't get you anything.

The prizes automatically set *SwordQuest* apart from the other videogames on the market. However, aesthetically it is also a break from anything else in the videogame field.

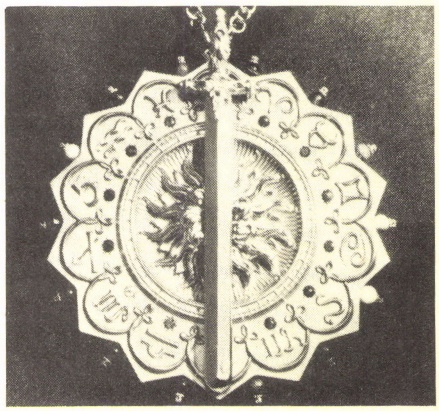
But is it good or bad? That's difficult to say.

Although the player is "magically transformed into a skillful rogue" according to Atari literature, he or she is a rogue without threat or conflict. Nothing chases the player, nothing can hurt you, and you cannot be destroyed. The quest is one of pure logic with a minimum of traditional, visceral involvement.

Whether that's a refreshing change or a conceptual miscalculation is for the public to decide. It all depends on how many people out there are as interested in using brain cells as elbow grease. Regardless, it is a bold experiment which may open new avenues for the videogame field.

SwordQuest is daring not only in that it's different, but Atari isn't just testing one game: there are four of them tied up in a two-year-long contest.

Judging from early reaction — initial sales, not to mention the looks on the reporters' faces as they were shown to the room where the prizes were on display — Atari has a good chance of pulling *SwordQuest* off.



The reward for solving EarthWorld is this gold, gem-studed pendant worth $25,000.

VIDEOGAMING ILLUSTRATED PROFILE

Don Imus

by June Davis

By his own humble admission, he's "God's chosen, re-rosen disc jockey." By the admission of New York City's WNBC Radio, he's "the best disc jockey we ever fired." By his listeners' admission he's brilliant; they love his wildly unpredictable sense of humor and look forward to the shenanigans which spice up their early morning hours.

He's Don Imus, of "Imus in the Morning" (5:30 to 10:00 A.M. daily). He's a comedic genius in a medium where it's a daily challenge to be, and remain, a creative force. He can light up his broadcast with an improbable and slightly demented "fairy tale" about the Wizard of Ooze as told by "Crazy Bob". Or he might deliver a hard-hitting editorial from Geraldo Santana Banana warning listeners that turning to another radio station could be harmful to their health. Then again, he may continue his indefatigable effort to track down Idi Amin in order to make him climb the Empire State Building.

Don personally directs his on-the-air craftsmanship.

In early September of 1979, Imus brought his lively brand of good naturedly vicious fun back to the WNBC perch which he had held for six years before his now-famous 1977 firing for on-air vulgarity — not to mention chronic tardiness and absenteeism.

A native of Riverside, CA, and a graduate of Arizona State University, Imus came to New York in 1971 for his first stint on WNBC — quite an accomplishment for a radio personality with not quite three years experience.

Since that time, he has not only become the Big Apple's number one disc jockey, but a noted nightclub comedian and author of *God's Other Son: The Life And Times of the Reverend Billy Sol Hargus,* based on the exploits of Imus' shyster preacher, who is another frequent visitor on his program.

If Imus is the voice of insanity, Charles McCord, his partner and station newsman, is the voice of reason. He tempers Imus' outlandish views every half hour during the newscasts. He is the velvet glove to Imus' steel fist.

Together, they make for an unusual interview. Every once in a while, McCord can get down and get serious, but Imus' bag is heavy sarcasm.

VGI: On a recent show, you and Mr. McCord decided that the world would be a better place without videogames. What's the problem here?
IMUS: They invented these things that you play on television so that when there's nothing on you can ...! Oh, God, it's just insanity. And they cause cancer, by the way. They do.
McCord: In laboratory rats.
IMUS: Rats who play *Pac-Man* get cancer!
VGI: Did you know that *Pac-Man* is one of the few games that appeals to women?
IMUS: That's because it's a sick deal. It's an eating thing, you know. A lot of women are *perverts*.
McCord: There must be something deeply Freudian about that.
VGI: What games have you played?
IMUS: I've never played one. I never intend to play one.
McCord: And I resisted. It's only because I have a seven year old at home that I was forced to give in. He got all his little friends together and they were planning to beat me up ... sort of a Lilliputian affair.
VGI: So you have played home video then?
McCord: I have. The one area I find especially interesting is the chess program.
IMUS: Why don't you just play real chess?
McCord: Because you play against the computer. It's kind of fun. There are eight different skill levels. I run it right up to 8 and get a halfway decent game out of it.
IMUS: You know, McCord, you're nuts.
VGI: Is chess it for you, then?
McCord: No, my son had to have some others which I understand are versions of arcade games. I find them mindless and infantile. I don't think they benefit a kid one bit. The most detrimental thing about them is that they keep kids from other pursuits which could be much more beneficial, i.e. reading or doing something creative.
VGI: Aren't *some* videogames creative ... inspirational to the imagination?
McCord: These games require no creativity at all. They simply test the quickness of motor responses and nothing else. They develop the skill of playing videogames. Well, take that to Chemical Bank and see what you get.
IMUS: Tell the world that I want no one who plays videogames to listen to "Imus in the Morning," by the way. I'm serious.
VGI: That should cut the audience down substantially. What you're saying seems part of the paranoia running rampant: television and movie people feel videogames are cutting into their patrons, and surveys indicate that these games entice listeners from radio —.
IMUS: I don't care. I don't want them to listen anyway. They can go play their games. We're doing all the funny stuff and they're playing their stupid little games with people eating each other ... Besides, it's hard to play a videogame on the way to work.
VGI: Really, don't you think there's a possibility that videogames are shrinking radio audience?
IMUS: No. God, are you crazy? You've lost your mind.
VGI: How about this then — do you forsee a way to integrate rock music with videogame mania?
McCord: Why not? Pipe in anything. Pipe in Brahms.
IMUS: Or a little *Eagle*.
McCord: Sure. These kids don't have to pay attention to anything anyway. You can't hear anything anyway, except the jingle and jangle of the various video machines. I mean, is that music? The game with the flattened frog, *Frogger*, has an amusing but repetitious tune. Eventually, it gets kind of irritating because every time a kid resets a game, the damned tune is repeated.
IMUS: Many of these games are based on violence like shooting and dumb stuff like that. There's one where the kids have a steering wheel and they see how many cars they can pass.
McCord: That frog game where it crosses the road against oncoming trucks and automobiles shows the frog getting mashed. It makes a horrible sound. It goes squish and spreads out, real gooey ... That's the only one I really like.
IMUS: Yeah. I *like* that.
McCord: I'm heavily into violence and killing little animals.
IMUS: Can you see the frog's guts on the screen?

McCord: Darn near! He goes out on all four legs and is flattened.
IMUS: How sick is that?
VGI: The bottom line is, like it or not, videogames are a part of life. What would make you happy? A videogame with Billy Sol Hargus as the theme?
IMUS: Uh — how much bread are we talking about up front here?
VGI: So you *would* let your characters become videogame themes?
McCord: Of course, overnight!
IMUS: Now we're talking here.
McCord: I've always said that these games have a lot of promise and that they challenge you intellectually.
IMUS: Well now, I think so too. Yessir, we'd be *very* interested in contacting a video company to explore this possibility.
VGI: Since every game needs an object — like *Frogger* where the object is *not* to get run over — what do you think the object of a Rev. Billy Sol Hargus game would be?
IMUS: Searching for a handbasket and then going to hell.
McCord: Or drowning.
IMUS: Then you'd lose the handbasket motif.
VGI: In spite of your feelings about videogames, would you admit that they are an art-form?
IMUS: Sure, like Norman Mailer produces art.
VGI: At least the videogames expose people to the capabilities of a computer. How about the advantages there?
McCord: Just punching a button is not really exposure to computer technology. Unless, of course, these games have a keyboard and the capacity for setting up and solving problems. I think it's still a pretty big leap from videogames to computers.
VGI: But some sort of computer is almost standard equipment in many schools now. Isn't it possible that kids get so turned on by the games that they yearn to learn what makes them tick so they can design them themselves?
McCord: I suppose that's valid.
IMUS: That's a load.
McCord: Certainly we're experiencing an explosion of computer and microchip technology that has progressed so quickly that we're a little bit intimidated by it. It's mystifying to us, but not to the kids. To them it's a part of the everyday world. They really helped spawn this interest which created a market for the home computer.
VGI: Finally; a good word about videogames.
IMUS: It didn't come from me.
McCord: Maybe why we're angry about these things is because there's no possibility of our ever understanding them unless we're under the age of ten!
VGI: Speaking of anger, many parents also complain about videogames' expense.
McCord: Yes? Dumping those damn quarters into those things really adds up ... unless you have one of those home deals. But of course, you dump a lot of money into that too.
VGI: There is even a positive side to that. The videogame industry has been a boon to the economy. New businesses and career opportunities have opened up and flourished.
IMUS: The fact that they make money doesn't make them all right. You can make money selling drugs too, you know. These machines are doping up kids, even if you can't put computers up your nose.
VGI: For less physical types, videogames are a way to succeed that doesn't require a football field, a baseball diamond, or a basketball court. Isn't that important?
IMUS: You mean kids who don't want to be real men? Is that what you're saying? Kids who want to be *fruitballs?* Is that what we're talking about here? Are all people who play videogames *homosexuals?*
VGI: No. It gives people who are not jocks a place to go and succeed through strategy, skill, and determination — no matter how strong they are.
IMUS: How about the library? Can't they go to the library?
McCord: That's right. If you really want to be successful, crack a book.
VGI: Would you feel better about videogames if they concentrated more on historical or classical themes?
McCord: Same deal. That's just a retailoring of the machine with no real improvement. You know what I would like to see? I would like to see them all short-out simultaneously. Around the world.
IMUS: That's the reason *I* want another blackout.
VGI: Since these machines are a problem for you, would you be adverse to doing a commercial on the air for them?
IMUS: Oh, no. Of course not. NBC pays the freight here. It's not my radio station, it's theirs. They hired me to read the commercials. And I'll read them. It costs so much to get on this radio station ... particularly on this program ... well, I can't think of any sleazy products that we advertise.
McCord: Of course, he has no scruples anyway, so it wouldn't make any difference if the product were sleazy or not.
VGI: If someone with scruples and creativity were to create a Rev. Billy Sol Hargus game, would that help propel the videogame industry toward more worthwhile content?
IMUS: Yeah, but you might get some heat from the Moral Majority about Hargus walking on water and all that.
VGI: What about the educational possibilities of videogames? Do you see any application of them as a teaching tool?
IMUS: Sure. There are infinite possibilities. I just thought of an educational game. We call it "Single's Bar." The idea is to *score!*
VGI: And you think *that's* an improvement?
IMUS: Yeah, it gives the grownups something to do.
VGI: Seriously, any closing thoughts?
IMUS: All right, okay, I *like* them. I just don't intend to *play* them, that's all. All right?
VGI: Fair enough.
IMUS: Well, it's been fun, but we've given you much more time than you deserve. ▲

The Joystick REVOLUTION

Buttons and arcade-quality controls invade home videogaming

by Jim Clark

There isn't a videogame console on the market whose joysticks can't stand some improvement.

For example:

*The Intellivision disc is difficult to manipulate. The additional directional functions be dashed, it's tough to make movements which aren't left and right.

*The ColecoVision handle is too short. You can't get a tight-fisted grip on it, and for players who really get into their games, this is a drawback.

*Astrocade's on its last legs, but some enthusiasts claim it was never in the running: after a few months of play, the joystick/knob combination tends to get stuck.

*The Atari joystick is great — if you're right-handed. Lefties are consigned to sucking pond water.

*Odyssey's unit is okay, but the handle is just too delicate: you can't really get cooking if you're afraid of breaking the stick.

With the explosion of videogame software has come an increase in the amount of hardware which is also available. In previous issues, we showed you the liquid mercury joystick which you operate with one hand (that one doesn't seem to have caught on; too pricey and there's a fractional delay in its response time), and the Zircon joystick-knob unit which is a sturdier version of Astrocade's grip.

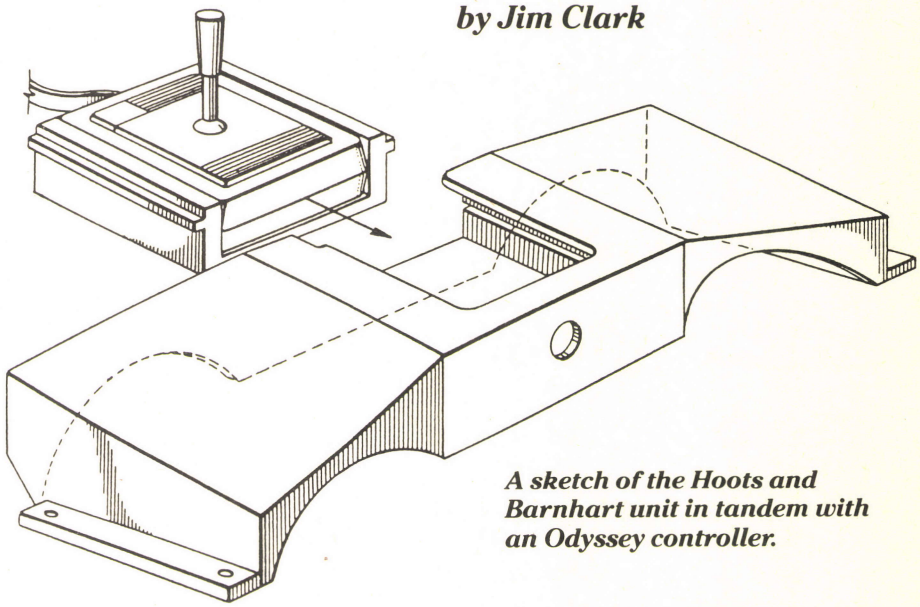
Now, however, there is much more to choose from, some of the equipment remedying the problems enunciated above — and some you didn't even know you had until the products were made available!

The most serious complaint lodged against the home units is that they aren't as sturdy or as responsive as their arcade counterparts.

That's true. The cost of the arcade controls is considerably higher than home joysticks, and the technology packed into the cabinet is more sophisticated than Atari et al can cram into your little home console.

However, DZyne Video Products (64 Dayton Road, Waterford, CT, 06385) has produced a sturdy joystick which is as close to an arcade control as the market has ever seen.

The Supr-Stick is compatible with the Atari VCS, as well as with the 400,800, Commodore VIC 20, and similar units. Actual arcade components are used in its construction, requiring comparatively light pressure and responding with greater speed than any stick currently available.



A sketch of the Hoots and Barnhart unit in tandem with an Odyssey controller.

Supr-Stick

The action button is likewise heavy-duty and located where it's most convenient: behind the stick, making it equally accessible to right-handed and left-handed players.

The Supr-Stick retails for $39.95, and is something no serious videogamer should be without.

DZyne also manufactures two other useful products, a pair of extension cords with which to connect any nine-pin joystick to the videogame console.

These cords come in handy with two of those items-you-never-knew-you-needed: a Videogame Controller Holder and the Grand Stand.

Both items are "stands" for videogame controls, though the former is the less ostentatious of the two.

The Videogame Controller Holder is the handiwork of Greg Hoots and Chris Barnhart of PO Box 1401, Topeka, KS, 66601. Right now, you have to custom-order one, in wood, for "under $50." By early next year, the inventors expect to be producing them in plastic for less

than $30, and in do-it-yourself kits.

The Holder is an odd-looking contraption, but functional: you slide your joystick unit into the Holder, then slip the latter onto your lap. There are two concave excavations in which you slip your legs.

According to Hoots, "It allows use of the index finger to operate the action button and also relieves the stress associated with holding and squeezing the hand held controller."

The only problem they have is with the short-stiff cord of Intellivision. "You've got to sit close to it," Hoots concedes. However, for it and for ColecoVision, where the action buttons are on the side, there are arcade-style fire buttons built right into the lapstand to enhance the arcade simulation.

Suncom also makes Starfighter and Slik Stik, a pair of high performance joysticks. While they respond fractionally better than Atari joysticks, they are lightweights in terms of simulating arcade realism. The advantage of Starfighter over its competitors, however, is that its internal mechanisms are made out of case-hardened stainless steel rather than plastic, which makes it more durable.

They are also better buys than other joysticks, at $16.95 and $9.95, respectively.

(Actually, the players who tested both for us preferred the cheaper Slik Stik over its more expensive counterpart. Slik Stik has been a knob on the top of the handle which gives you a better grip on the unit.)

Slightly more handsome and a tad more innovative is PointMaster, a new joystick from HWH Enterprises of 16 East 52nd Street, NY, NY 10022.

"The joysticks I have used personally all had limitations as far as design and features are concerned," says inventor Bruce Maier., "Instead of typically having the firing button separate from the joystick control, PointMaster provides a convenient thumb trigger at the top of the joystick handle."

Though other units such as Video Command and Le Stick (covered in issues #1 and #2, respectively) have had the action button on top, the former was too large and slow-to-respond, and the

The PointMaster, one of the trimmer units you can buy. The handle offers excellent grip, abetted by high-tech design.

latter was atop the otherwise- clunky liquid mercury unit. PointMaster is the first joystick to combine the traditional Atari-type unit with the on-top action button.

Players are equally divided as to its utility: some find it disorienting, interfering with play, other convenient for thumb-on-top, one-handed action.

Decide for yourself at $16.95 (two for $31.90).

No company in the field has more unusual and *considerate* joysticks than KY Enterprises (195 Claremont Ave., Suite 288, Long Beach, CA, 90803).

KY produces a FingerTip Controller, which we'll get to in a moment. First, a word about their controls for the disabled.

We hope they make a fortune on these. Providing videogame access to people who have limited or no use of their limbs is both noteworthy and humanitarian.

KY's units range from a mouth-operated controller at $55 to a $150 multigame board which eliminates the need to handle a cartridge each time a different game is desired. There is also a hand-wrist controller for people with spastic movement of hands or for operation using the feet. KY even has a unit where movement of the on-screen objects are governed by the head, the action button run by a "puff switch."

Less specialized is KY's FingerTip Controller. This is a box with five buttons: one is the action button, the other four are directional controls. The buttons work just like they do on arcade games like *Phoenix*.

If you're used to a joystick, this will take some getting used to. It also requires a bit more coordination. However, once you get the hang of it you can change directions much more rapidly than with a joystick. KY offers a left-handed version as well as one for righties.

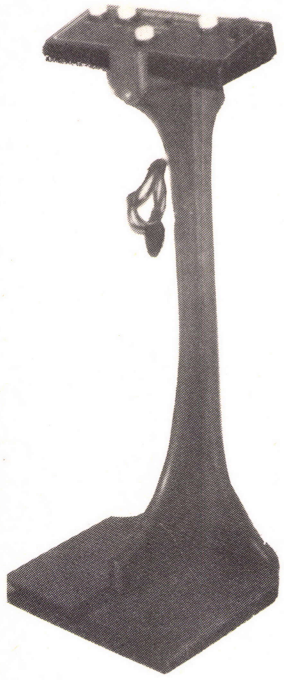
The FingerTip Controller sells for $19.95, the kit for $14.95.

In terms of improving your joystick game, these are the most unique and/or satisfying products on the market. However, this is just the beginning of the joystick invasion, one which will continue until our games come equipped with voice recognition.

KY's FingerTip Controller, the most compact push button unit available.

You may feel a little silly standing behind the Grand Stand (The Grand Stand Co., 4231 Bluebell Ave., Studio City, CA 91607), sort of like Lincoln waiting for Stephen Douglas to show up: the thing looks like a lectern and, in that context, elevates gameplay to Biblical importance.

At the same time, the unit feels like a kid's scooter: you put your feet on the



The Grand Stand, shown here with a push button controller.

base and lean it toward you when you sit down. The joystick screws neatly into the top of the unit.

Functional? It *does* make your controller feel more solid, and in conjunction with the Supr Stick is about as close to an arcade controller as you'll get in the home.

The Grand Stand is manufactured from solid wood with a fine walnut finish. If you want a conversation-piece hunk of furniture, this is for you.

The Grand Stand sells for $34.95.

Perhaps the most useful product of all, in terms of improving joystick performance, is the Skil-Stik from C & T Creations (127 Weybosset St., Providence, RI, 02903).

This is an easy-to-attach joystick handle for your Intellivision/Tandyvision keypad. There is no need to take the hand control unit apart: you just peel off the bottom of the double-sided tape at the base of the Skil-Stik and press onto the disc, allowing for swifter and more accurate response. it may *look* like a marker from *Candy Land,* but it's an inexpensive ($5.99 for a package of two) jewel.

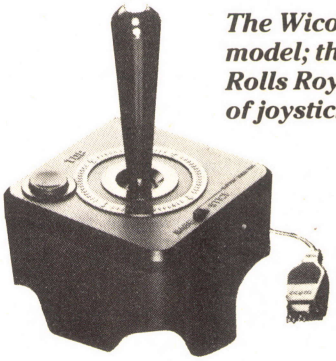
For forty-two years, a company by the name of Wico has been the largest designer of control devices for arcade games.

Now, the Wico technology is available in the home, for your Atari VCS, and two of their units are of particular importance to home videogamers.

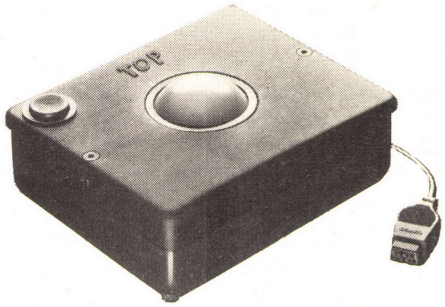
Their Command Control joystick is a joy — a wonderfully responsive and durable unit. It's a sleeker unit than the SupR Stick, and gameplay is virtually identical. Some players prefer the "weight" of the latter, since SupR Stick *feels* more like the panel of an arcade game; other videogamers may prefer the lighter Wico unit. In either case, the $29.95 pricetag of the Command Control joystick can't be beat. This is one of the two joysticks you must own.

Slightly more expensive, but worth every penny, is Wico's Track Ball. This is the first such unit available for the home and it, too, is a delight. The ivory ball sits in the center of a black and red casing, the action button on the top left.

It's as freeflowing as its arcade counterpart and, despite a $69.95 pricetag — a bargain if you consider play value — the Track Ball is something no serious videogamer can be without.



The Wico model; the Rolls Royce of joysticks.



Wico strikes pay dirt again with its Trackball.

Suncom Inc., at 270 Holbrook Drive, Wheeling, IL, 60090, has taken some of the chauvinism out of videogaming with Lefty, an adaptor which turns "normal" joysticks into left-handed joysticks. In short, you turn the joystick so that the action button is in the right-hand corner instead of the left. Interfacing Lefty rearranges the directional signals so that the correct on-screen movement is achieved.

Arcadia Joysticks

All these manufacturers seem eager to recreate the playing ease and comfort of the myriad arcade controls. The Atari stick is just a stiff stand-in for the trackball of *Missile Command,* the buttons of *Astroids* and *Space Duel,* and the red ball topped stick of *Dig Dug* and *Kangaroo.*

Bally/Midway has these button-type controls and more. *Gorf* set the standard for pistol grip controls, giving the player a greater feel for the cataclysmic space conflict. Their new *Solar Fox* started its arcade life with a simple red ball stick, but benefitted from a pistol grip refitting. Now players can use both the handle's trigger or an optional fire button.

Sega/Gremlin has a pistol grip on their revolutionary *Zaxxon,* but this company is also a great proponent of the steering wheel control. On both it's sitdown and upright versions of *Monaco G.P.,* there's a thick padded wheel as well as a solid stick shift. It looks like ColecoVision will be the first to offer this option to modern homevideogame players when it releases its version of Sega/Gremlin's popular *Turbo* race.

The *double* red ball sticks make for some frenetic playing at the hands of Stern's *Tutankham,* Taito's *Space Dungeon,* and, especially, Williams' *Robotron 2084.* But a control stick of truly another dimension is Bally/Midway's *Tron.*

It has a special device which looks and feels like a comfortably winning combination of the pistol grip and regular stick control. Adding to the game playing pleasure is a dial — a fixture arcade players might remember from the likes of Taito's *Wild Western.* Sega/Gremlin's new *Zektor* game also gives new life to the helpful dial control.

But no overview of arcade controls could be complete without the fond memories of the scope and target games. Instead of mere buttons, sticks, balls and dials, these machines had entire weapons or periscopes attached. There was a real hands-on feeling when blasting targets or sinking sea-going vessels with both arms wrapped around these impressive controls.

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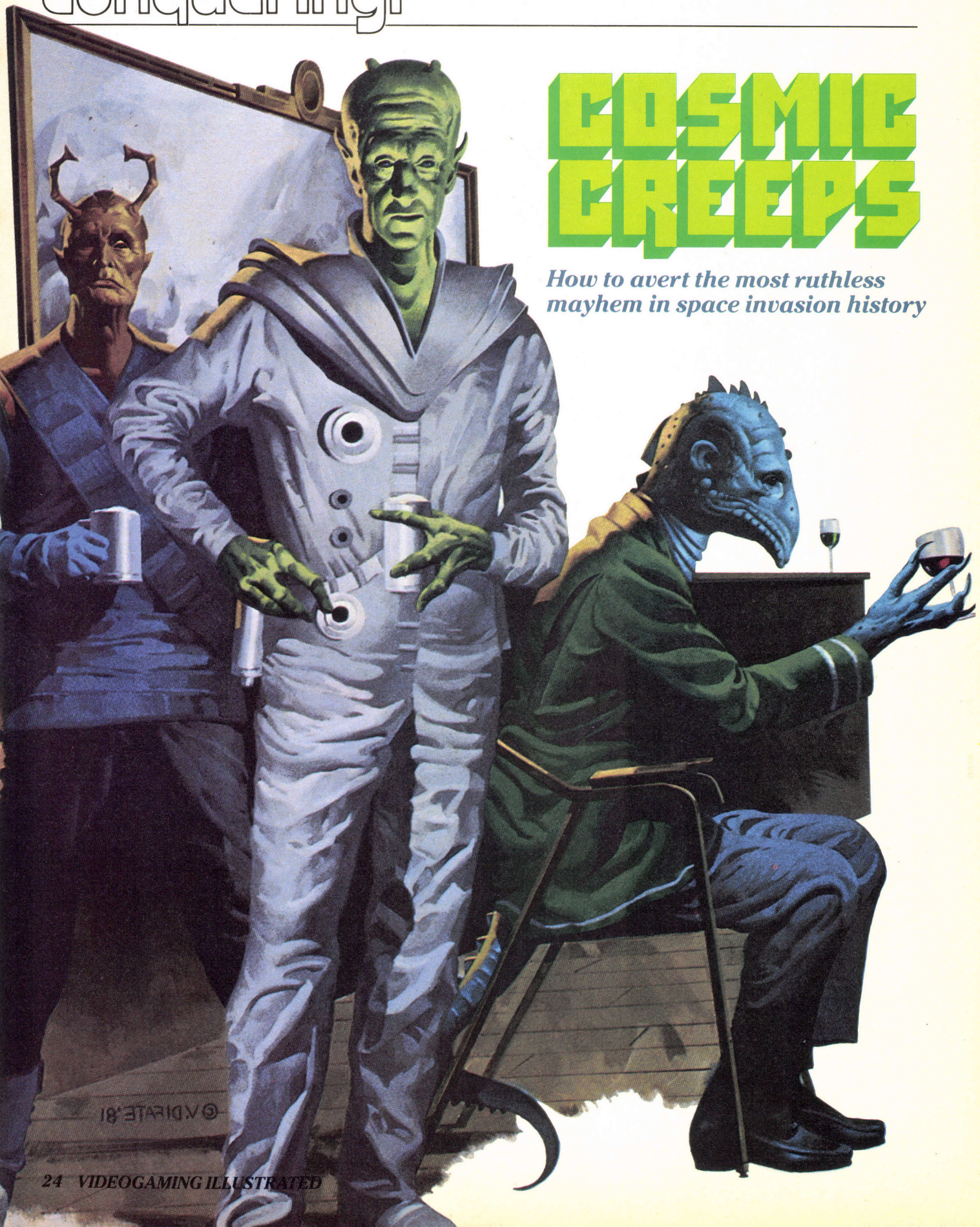


COSMIC CREEPS

How to avert the most ruthless mayhem in space invasion history

Object

The Cosmic Creeps in this Atari-compatible game are just that: aliens so low, so vile that they relish vaporizing children!

With earth in the grip of an awesome invasion, your task is twofold. First, you must guide your courageous Orbinaut to a space station in earth orbit. The flight is a perilous one, the space-suited figure having to maneuver around fleet-moving Creep drone ships called Skeeters, as well as floating clouds of plasma, the latter being death-inducing wisps of red poison deposited in earth's atmosphere by the aliens.

Once onboard the space station, situated at the bombay controls, it is necessary that the Orbinaut signal earth to start sending its children spaceward. This they do, but the invasion force is not about to let humankind's progeny go without a fight.

As the children ascend one-at-a-time, a pair of Creeps chases them upward. Only the Orbinaut's target-shooting skills can prevent the kids from being disintegrated and ensure earth's survival!

Variations

There is only the one grand mission, though it is broken into waves. The earth orbits slowly from side-to-side at the bottom of the screen. At the same time, it sets: once it sinks below the horizon, the exodus and invasion both freeze.

If you have scored five thousand points or more the game begins again, Orbinaut ascent and all, with your points being cumulative. If not, the game is over.

The challenge of each successive game is enhanced by the fact that the Creeps and Kids both move more quickly.

Scoring

Each Kid that makes it to the Space Station without being vaporized earns you 1,500 points. Every Creep that you disable is valued at one hundred points.

There is no point value for getting the Orbinaut safely to the space platform, nor do points increase as the game progresses.

Again, if you surpass five thousand points in a round, that score is tacked on to the score you achieve in the next round.

Control

Cosmic Creeps is played with the joystick.

In phase one, pushing the joystick forward sends the Orbinaut hurtling from earth, the stick also used to maneuver the bold astro-traveller through the seas of plasma and alien vessels.

During the second phase, the joystick moves your sleek Space Station horizontally across the top of the screen, while your action button releases the so-called "boppers' which demolecularize the Creeps.

Note that when a fleet Creep overtakes a slower one, and your bomb happens to land on them both, only one will be destroyed.

After a game has ended, pressing the action button returns the full, twelve-notch earth to the screen and begins the game anew. Obviously, you should not commence the action until the space above your Orbinaut is free of plasma. You'd also be wise not to launch when earth is near the sides of the screen, since it is from here that the Skeeters emerge and puncture your poor starperson.

Patterns

In the opening segment, the plasma floats in clouds which scroll vertically in the same pattern, which repeats itself every fifteen seconds. The Skeeters come and go at random, though they can only travel horizontally.

The earth takes just under two and one-half minutes to sink twelve notches, which is the duration of each wave.

When the battle proper begins, the first Kid always emerges with two Creeps on his/her tail. Thereafter, a new Creep appears whenever one is blasted, though there are never more than two Creeps on-screen at any given time. It takes Creeps and Kids anywhere from five to twenty-five seconds to cross the field to the Space Station. There is no way of telling which video entity will travel at which speed.

The Orbinaut's journey skyward is more predictable. The suited figure is hurtled aloft from wherever the earth happens to be on the horizon. As for the location of the Space Station, it always appears where you left it when the last game ended. The exception is when you shut the console, in which case the Space Station bobs back and forth on top of the screen until you hit "game reset," at which point it freezes where it is for the duration of the Orbinaut's ascent.

Strategies

When you first turn the game on, the earth and the Space Station will be moving in tandem. If you memorize the plasma patterns, it will be a simple matter to stop the space craft at a place where its juxtaposition with earth will provide the Orbinaut a relatively plasma-free ascent path, allowing you to concentrate fully on the Skeeters.

Tangentially, never hit the action button to begin a new game until the bottom of the screen is free of plasma. That will allow you to take off at once. (If the earth appears on the side of the screen, you're playing the odds to launch immediately, hoping a Skeeter won't suddenly appear.)

In the combat mode of the game, apart from learning to time your shots so that they intercept the moving Creep, there are a few very simple tactics which should govern your play.

First, always remember that your Kid can run into a Creep and be vaporized just as easily as a Creep can trample your Kid. You must not only cover your Kid from the rear, you must blast a clear path ahead.

To this end, the slow Creeps are easy enough targets. You can sight and blast these with little effort. It's the rapid Creeps who are the problem. You've got to give yourself enough time to line these up and "bop" them before they run over your Kid.

Accordingly, it's a good idea to wait until the first three figures — the Kid and two Creeps — have ascended to the second of the game's five levels before you pick off the two creeps. New Creeps will emerge at once from the lower left of the bottom deck: whether they're fast or slow, you have time to shoot them before your Kid is in danger of being harmed.

The exceptions to not shooting the Creeps if they and a Kid are on the first level are, obviously, if a fast Creep emerges and immediately endangers your charge, or if the earth is near setting and a dead Creep or two may make the difference betwen 4,800 and five thousand points.

In some cases, heartless as it sounds, you may have to chance blast-

Continued on page 58

STAR WARS

A New Film and Two New Videogames Are Headed Your Way

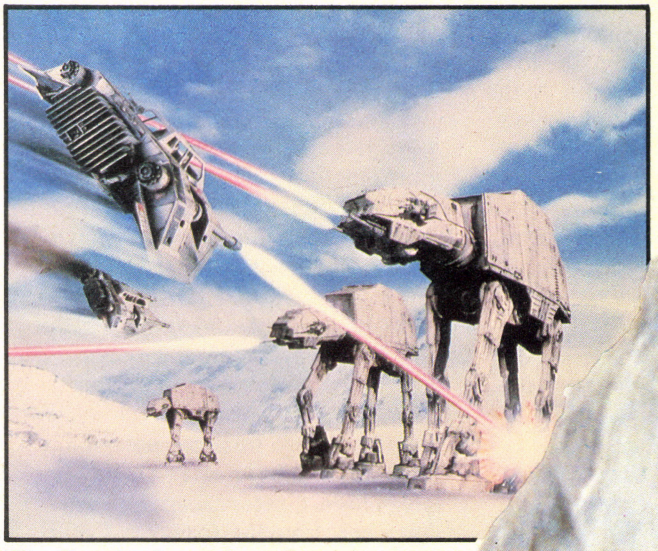
Since May of 1977, there has been, or will be, a new *Star Wars* film every three years.

The series is set far from earth, long before history as we know it began.

The first picture, directed by George Lucas, was a fast-paced space shoot-'em-up in which Grand Moff Tarkin and his vicious lieutenant Darth Vader seek to put down a rebellion against the omnipotent, freedom-crushing Empire.

Princess Leia Organa, Jedi Knight Obi-Wan Kenobi, and farmboy Luke Skywalker, aided by mercenary Han Solo and his Wookie pirate associate Chewbacca — with droids C3P0 and R2D2 along for the adventure — help the rebels thwart Tarkin by destroying his planet-destroying spaceship the Death Star.

The conflict raged on in *The Empire Strikes Back,* released in May of 1980. Irvin Kershner directed as Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Han, Chew-

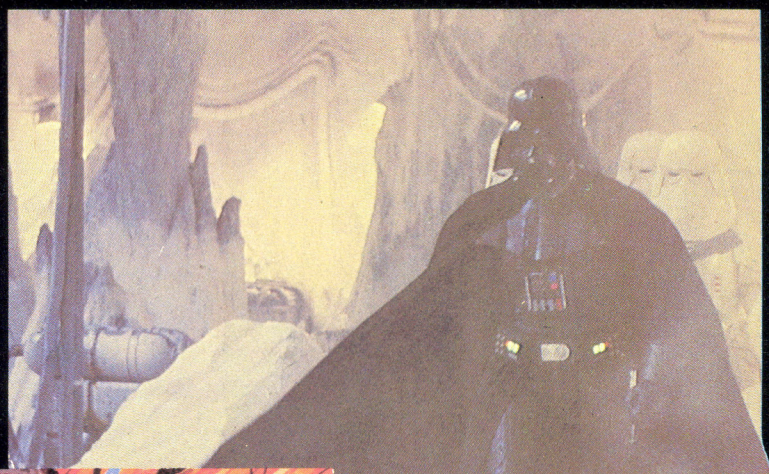


The Empire is equipped with a force of All Terrain Armored Transport Weapons (AT-AT) that are as intimidating as they are powerful. The rebels use their snowspeeders to fire upon the advancing walkers.

Plumes of snow rise from the speeding paws of Luke Skywalker's (Mark Hamill) large gray Tauntaun as he rides the beast up a slope and, spotting a flash of light, reins his nervous animal to a halt.

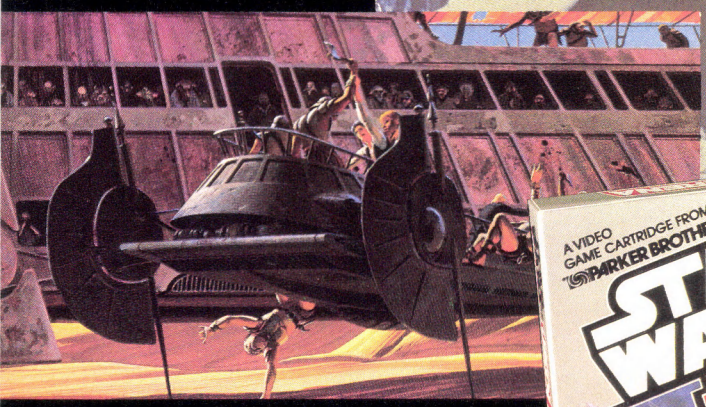
Imperial Stormtroopers take the remaining Millenium Falcon crew and Lando Calrissian to a Cloud City retention cell when Leia suddenly turns to see Luke Skywalker — Darth Vader's sought after prey — standing behind them.

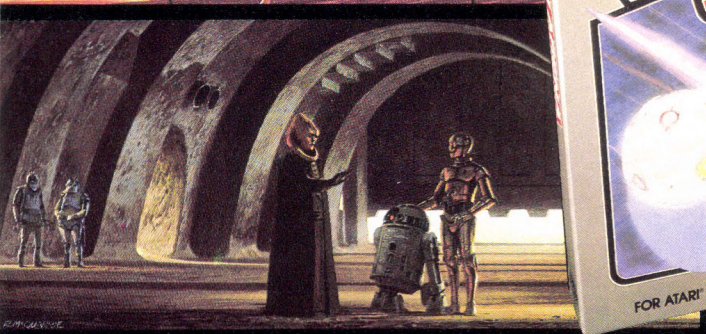
In the third chapter of George Lucas' enormously successful Star Wars Saga, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Princess Leia, Lando Calrissian, and Chewbacca fight for their lives on the desert wastes of Tatooine.

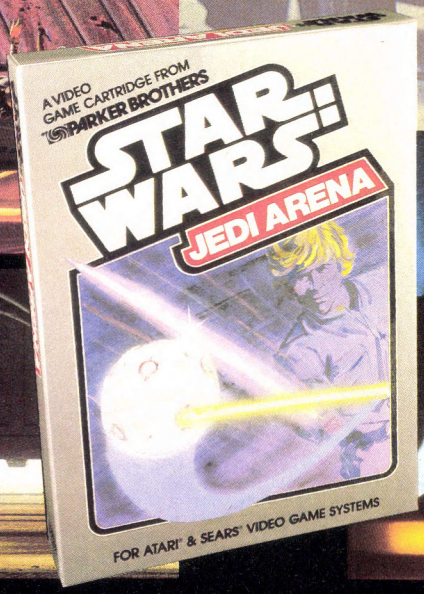


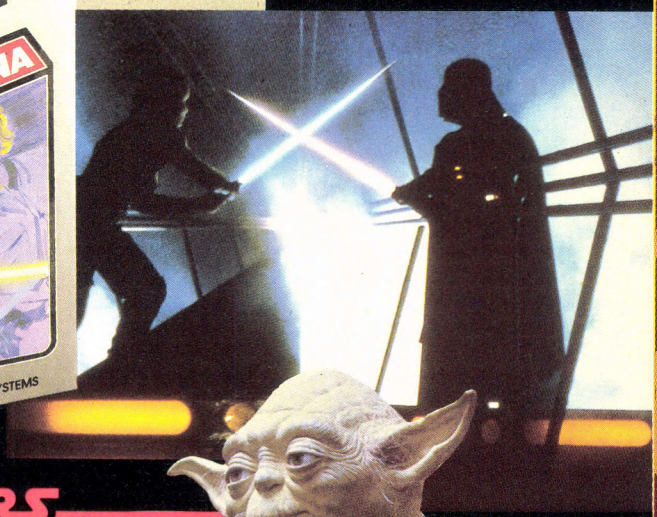
Darth Vader (David Prowse), accompanied by his stormtroopers, enters the ice hanger on Hoth.

Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader battle with lightsabers in the carbon-freezing chamber of Cloud City.









Han Solo escapes! In the new chapter of the saga, robots R2-D2 and C-3P0 keep his captors busy (above) so Lando and Chewbacca can make good his rescue (below).

STAR WARS
REVENGE OF THE JEDI

Yoda, the ancient teacher of the Jedi Knights.

bacca, the robots, and the rebels meet Vader's troops on the ice planet Hoth and carry the battle to Lando Calrissian's Cloud City on Bespin.

During the course of the film, Luke takes a side-trip to the planet Dagobah, where he meets Yoda, a Jedi master. Yoda tutors Luke in the ways of the Force — the mystical, universal energy from which Jedi Knights draw their power. The film ends with a clash of light-sabers, Luke dueling Darth Vader to a draw and learning that once-noble, now corrupted Jedi Knight is really his father.

Director Richard Marquand's *Revenge of the Jedi* will be coming to theatres nationwide in May of 1983, concluding the trilogy of the rebel fight against the Empire. The fourth film, for May of 1986, will jump backward in time, detailing the rise of the Empire.

The fifth and sixth films, for 1989 and

1992, will wrap up *that* storyline, after which 1995's entry will pick up where *Revenge of the Jedi* left off. *That Star Wars* saga will conclude with films in 1999 and 2002.

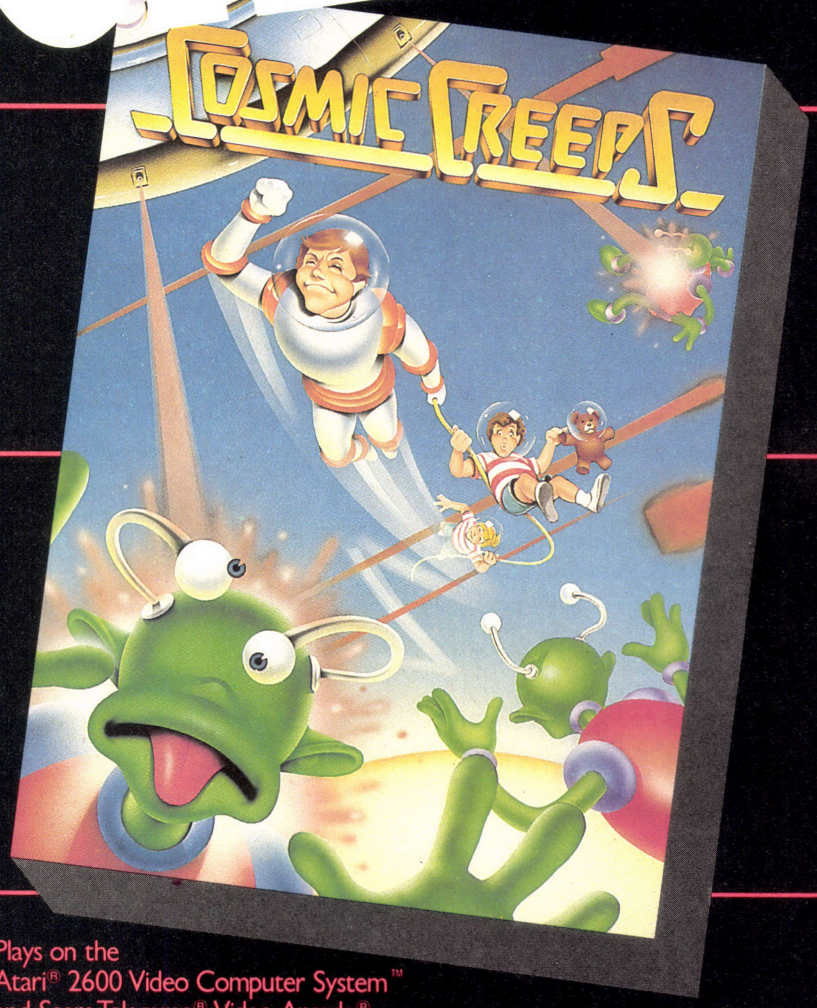
Grand scenarist Lucas assures us that the only characters which will be featured in all nine films are the two robots.

A quarter-century of *Star Wars* films! By that time, no doubt we really will be warring in space.

If we aren't, then we surely will be enjoying — in some form or another — dozens of *Star Wars* videogames which Parker Brothers will have released.

As reported in this issue's *Eye On,* sales of the first *Star Wars* videogame, *The Empire Strikes Back,* have been extraordinary. That game, of course, is based on the Battle of Hoth from the film, as rebel soldiers in snowspeeders

ORB IT!



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shoot at the mammoth, lumbering AT-ATs (All Terrain Armored Transports) which are plodding toward their encampments.

There is every reason to believe that Parker Brothers will once again strike gold with next month's release of the second *Star Wars* cartridge, *Jedi Arena.*

If playing *Jedi Arena* will be a treat, bringing the game to the Atari VCS has not been a picnic.

The object of *Jedi Arena* is to strike at the Seeker, the floating ball from whose lightning-like discharges Luke Skywalker tried to defend himself while practicing with his light-saber in the first *Star Wars*.

This was always the concept of the game, though it went through several different versions before Parker Brothers came up with one that was both faithful to the film and offered excellent gameplay.

The biggest problem was concocting an interesting Seeker scenario. Originally, the player's goal was to blow it up. Now, closer to the scene in the film, the Seeker throws off sparks which the player must repel.

The third *Star Wars* game, tentatively titled *Revenge of the Jedi,* will be released in June, one month after the film.

What's interesting about the third cartridge is that while the designers will be told what event from the film they must develop into a game, that's *all* they will be permitted to know.

To say that the makers of *Revenge of the Jedi* are being secretive is the understatement of the decade. The fear of filmmakers engaged in expensive projects such as this one — the cost is in excess of $25,000,000 — is that some unscrupulous producer will get wind of the plot and rush out a quick, low-budget theatrical or TV film.

Due to the lengthy, special effects — heavy production schedule of three years, only key personnel are aware of the details of any *Star Wars* film.

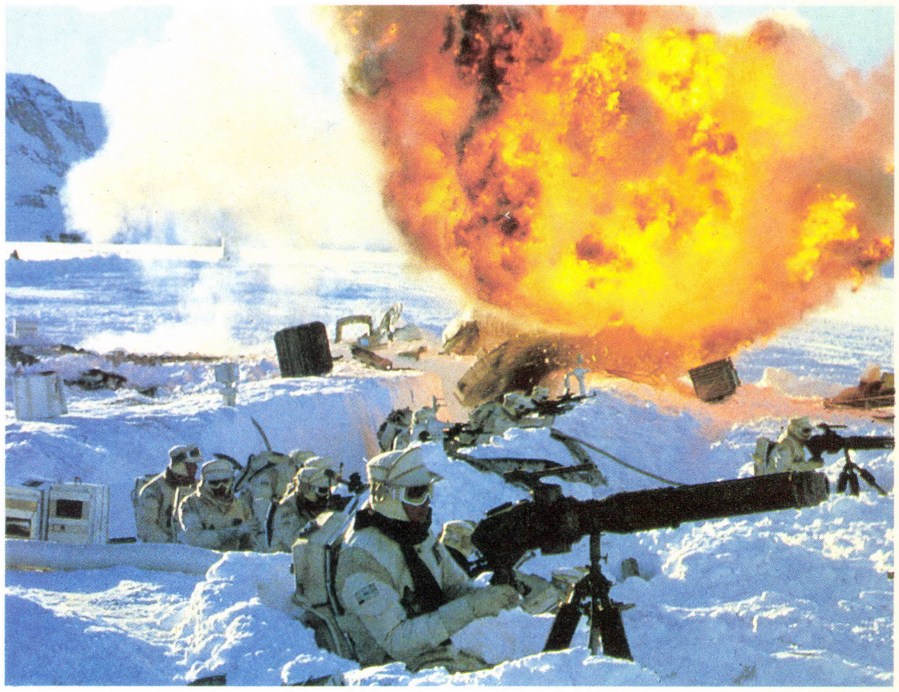
And when we say key personnel, we man *key* personnel! Even the *actors* don't know how the films are going to turn out. They are given only those pages of the script in which they appear, and in some cases multiple endings are shot so that they don't even know if their characters live or die.

An exclusive peek behind the making of *Revenge of the Jedi* and the other *Star Wars* films was recently provided to us by actor Dave Prowse.

Prowse, who had appeared in such films as *A Clockwork Orange* and *Frankenstein and The Monster from Hell* (under gobs of horror makeup) is the towering actor who plays Darth Vader. The voice of Vader is provided by James Earl Jones, but the villain's sinister bearing and regal carriage are all Prowse.

Prowse is also the man who put pounds of muscle on a scrawny young actor by the name of Christopher Reeve so that he could wear the red, blue, and yellow leotards of Superman.

VI: *Revenge of the Jedi* will be out in a few months. Have you seen any of the film?
DP: You must be joking. We didn't even see rushes *(film clips of the work an actor did the day before).*



VI: Sounds secretive.
DP: This is no bull, I've got *no* idea what happens in the movie. All I had were my twenty pages of the script, but no idea *where* those pages fit into the rest of the script. When I see it, what happens on the screen is going to be as big a surprise to me as it will be to the rest of the public. I don't even know what happens to Darth Vader. I've heard that George has three possible endings shot.
VI: You must know if Darth Vader dies. Did you *act* in a death scene?
DP: I didn't die in the bits I shot — but whether they shot something else without me, with somebody else dying as Darth Vader, I don't know.

VI: What is the difficulty in playing a character who, for all practical purposes, hasn't any expressions?
DP: Well, the most important aspect of playing Vader was to make everyone else subservient to him, which I did by the way I moved. The way I held myself and the speed at which I moved was important. I slowed it down a bit in *Empire* and *Jedi,* made it a little more subtle. A sort of "thinking person's" Vader.

VI: What was the biggest problem playing the character?
DP: Seeing. They put dark plastic in the eyes so that the camera wouldn't see inside the lenses. So you can't see through it, but on top of that you perspire. The heat from the body rises into the mask and mists up the plastic so you can't see where you're going. Finally, the mask is made in such a way that you can't see anything on the floor six to eight feet in front of you. So you have to judge all the time where your marks are. Walking down steps was awful.
VI: What's the helmet made of?
DP: Fiberglass, the mask being one piece and the helmet another. The mask straps on behind your head and the helmet fits on top.
VI: Was it always the plan to use James Earl Jones' voice as Darth Vader?
DP: I used to discuss it with George when we were filming *Star Wars,* since we knew from the start that we'd have to re-record all of my dialogue. No one could understand what I was saying

through the mask. But they finished the film, and since they couldn't get the special effects they wanted in England, where the principal photography had been done, they went to America. And once they were in America, they decided they didn't want to play Darth Vader with an English accent. James Earl Jones has done a marvelous job, and I'd love to have had the opportunity of doing it myself, but I think George was very pally with James Earl Jones, so I was never given any opportunity to do the part.

VI: Is the film industry traditionally insensitive to perfomers?

DP: Oh, definitely. Of course, it depends on where you're standing. If you're Sir Alec Guiness *(who played Obi-Wan Kenobi)* then the world's your oyster and you can do as you please. If you're Dave Prowse, then you're at the mercy of the movie moguls. Then again, they get so involved in the picture that it becomes all-consuming and everything else goes by-the-by. They seem to lose all consideration for actors. Take Stanley Kubrick, for whom I did *A Clockwork Orange.* To him, the most important thing was how the film was shot, the sets — and the actors were necessary appendages. And I think George Lucas thinks exactly the same way. They're the appendages to his ideas and his scenes and his sets and his models. He doesn't have to concern himself with the whims of a model spaceship, so he doesn't concern himself with what the actors are thinking.

VI: Of course, Lucas' concern for special effects did revolutionize the industry, introducing the large-scale use of computers to mate shots of the actors with shots of miniature models.

DP: There's no faulting the end-product. Computers have made these films far superior to anything that came before. I'm convinced that apart from the acting and directing, computers will take over every aspect of filmmaking. If I were a technician, I'd be very, very concerned. I expect we'll see loads and loads of union problems as computers come in and start replacing people.

VI: Computers have also made an enormous impact in arcade and home entertainment. How do you feel about videogames?

DP: I don't care for the ambiance of arcades, but I don't decry anyone who likes playing viedogames. Not at all. The only thing that worries me is when

Continued on page 58.

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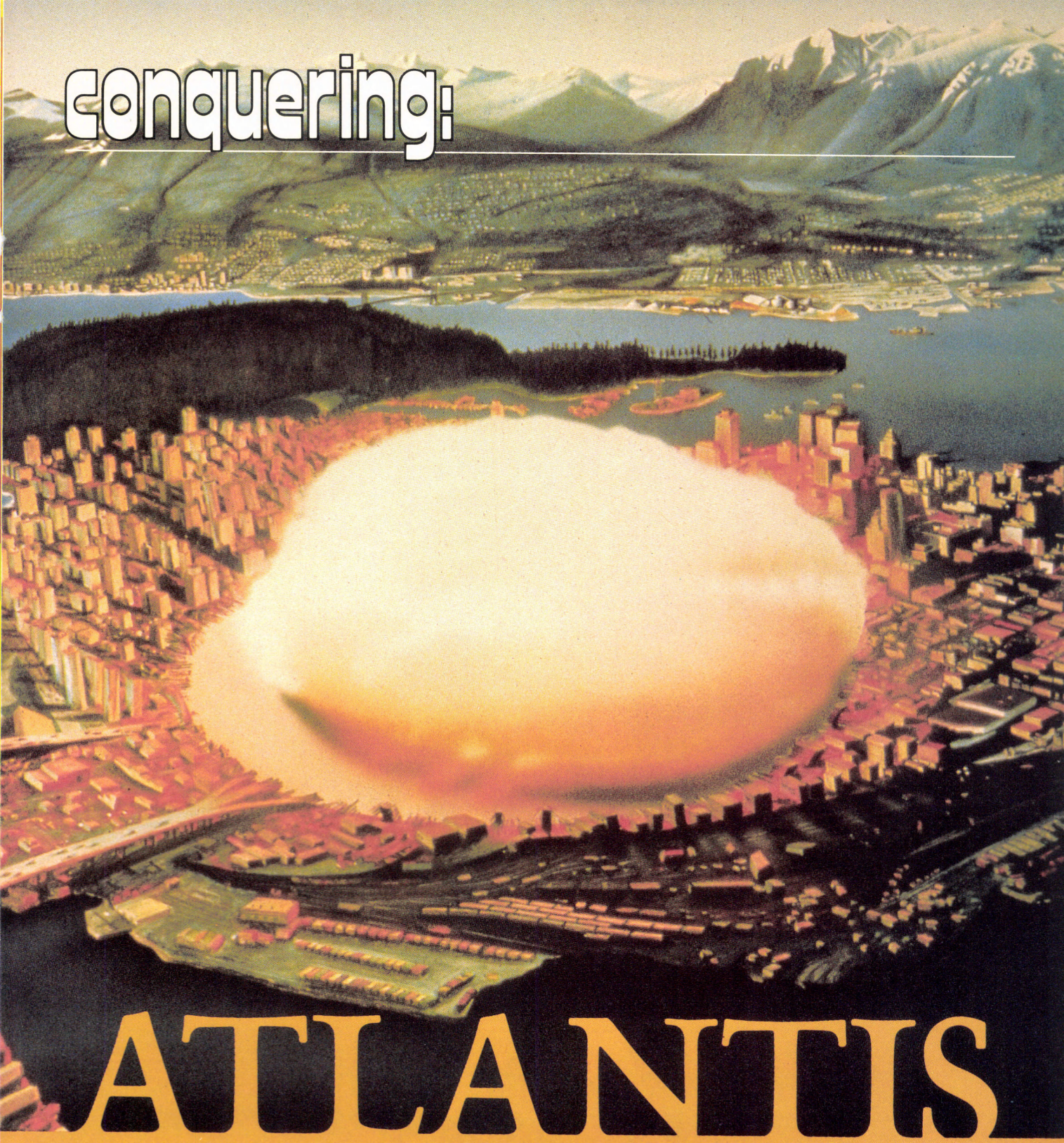
video victor

Written by Jeff Rovin Art by Nona Bailey



conquering: ATLANTIS

Prevent the continent from sinking anew in versions for both Atari and Intellivision consoles

Object

According to the Greek philosopher Plato, Atlantis as described in his great dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias* was a continent of considerable sophistication which was destroyed when "there occurred violent earthquakes and floods, and in a single day and night of rain (Atlantis) was sunk beneath the sea."

It is more likely that Atlantis, if it existed, was destroyed by tons of glacial ice circa 12,000 B.C.

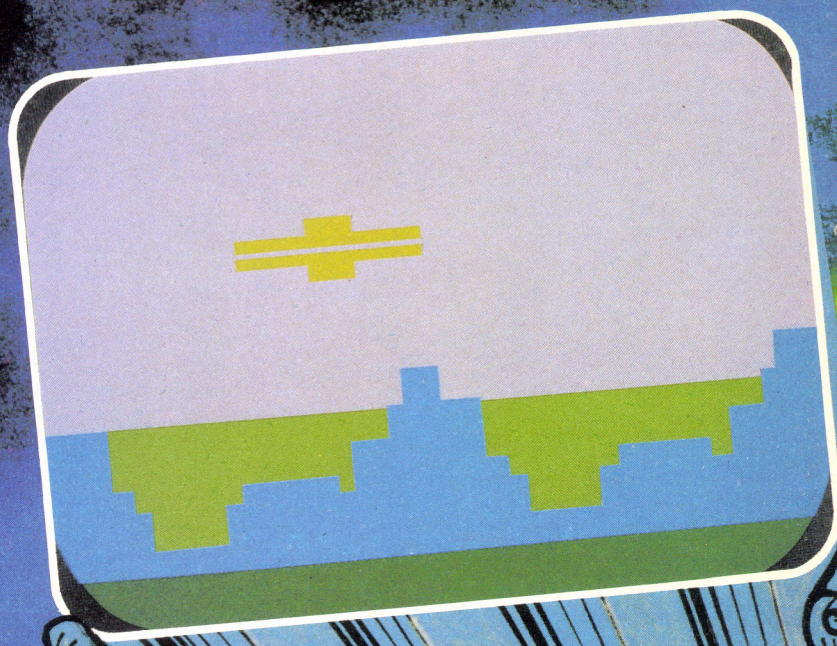
None of which has any relevance to or connection with the Imagic game

Atlantis, which has been released in versions compatible with both the Atari and Intellivision consoles.

The scenario in both games is the same. Atlantis, before the fall, sits peacefully in the tranquil waters of the Atlantic Ocean. There are three major districts to the city-state: the Aqua Plain, the Bridged Bazaar, and the Domed Palace. All are abuzz with activity beneath the comforting hum of energy generators and the shadow of defense posts.

The calm is misleading, of course. An ominous hum is heard from the distance and, within moments, the great metropolis is under attack!

The ships of the Gorgon fleet soar high and low over the lofty spires of Atlantis, trying to bomb every structure in sight. Eventually, they'll succeed: *Atlantis* is a game at which you can score impressive numbers, but it's impossible to do away with all the Gorgons. And once they achieve their goal, the survivors of bombed-out Atlantis scurry into a saucership and fly into space — where, according to the game's creators, they are still beleaguered as the protagonists of another Imagic game, *Cosmic Ark.*



Atari

Variations

Imagic's Atari-compatible game features three gunposts. The Acropolis Command Post is able to fire straight up from the city center; there are also two Sentry Posts, one firing from the lower left to the top right, the other from the bottom right to the upper left.

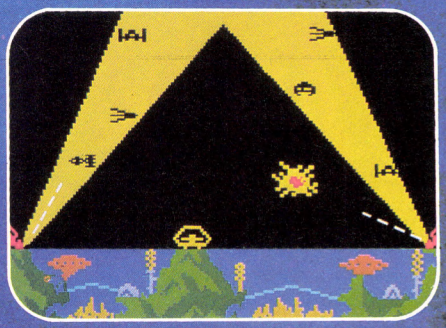
The Atari version features four game variations:

1. Each succeeding wave comes at you more quickly.
2. The Acropolis Command Post cannot fire.
3. Two player game, each player operating a Sentry Post with the Acropolis Command Post inactive.
4. The easiest version, the Gorgon vessels moving comparatively slowly, all batteries combat-ready.

The Intellivision edition features Easy, Medium, and Difficult levels, each defined by the relative speed of the attack ships.

This version is distinctive in that Gorgon ships are blasted not from fixed positions, but according to where the player places a gunsight. This targeting device is represented by crosshairs which can be moved all around the screen not unlike the bead in *Missile Command.* Projectiles can be dispensed to the crosshairs from the left or right side of the screen.

The player also has the option of launching an armed Sentinel Saucer with which to counter the attack. The ship has unlimited armaments, but a restricted amount of fuel.



Finally, the Intellivision assault against Atlantis carries on from daylight to dusk to night, where the enemy craft are dangerously visible only when they pass within the glow of spotlights.

Scoring

In the Atari version, hitting a Gorgon vessel from the Acropolis Command Post earns you 100 points, from the Sentry Posts twice that. Downing a fleet Gorgon Bandit Bomber earns you one or two thousand points, respectively. The destruction of the Bandit also knocks out every other vessel in the sky, though you only score for hitting the Bandit.

There are other scoring opportunities: you are awarded five hundred points at the end of every wave for each part of Atlantis which is still standing after the assault. The two Sentry Post guns are not included, since they cannot be destroyed. The Acropolis Command Post is *not* invulnerable.

Furthermore, for every ten thousand points you earn, a devastated portion of Atlantis will be restored.

Intellivision.

always starting with the Acropolis Command Post.

If you lose no buildings during a wave, your credits are stored.

The Intellivision scoring is considerably more straightforward. Each daylight-dusk-night period represents a full day. For each ship you shoot down on the first day, using a land-based post, you are awarded ten points. Surviving to the second day, you win twenty points per ship, thirty on the third day, and so on.

Vessels felled by the Atlantean saucer earn four times the amount of the land-based batteries during any given phase of the game.

There is no limit to the incremental climb of points: if you survive one hundred days, each ship you blast will win you one thousand points. Be aware, however, that even the game's creator has never lasted longer than twelve days!

Control

The joystick on the Atari edition determines which battery will launch the barrage. Leaving the stick in neutral will activate the Acropolis gun, pushing it to the right or left of the Sentry Post on those sides.

The action button fires the projectiles. Keeping the button depressed will spit out two missiles in tandem.

The Intellivision disc moves the gunsight or Saucer along the screen. Pressing either of the top buttons fires projectiles from the left Sentry Post. The bottom action button causes the Sentry Post on the right to discharge.

The Saucer can be made to fire left using either action button on the top, and right by either button on the bottom. Keep in mind that the Saucer is penalized ten seconds of its allotment of fuel every time it collides with an enemy vessel.

(For the kamikaze-minded player, the enemy craft will not be destroyed in such a maneuver. Only your armor-penetrating shells can stop the enemy.)

The Saucer is granted thirty-one seconds of fuel at the beginning of the game, tallied on a clock at the bottom of the screen. When it is in drydock, each passing second is *added* to the amount of time it will be able to fly next time it lifts off. The maximum time it can accumulate is ninety seconds.

Patterns

In both games, Gorgon ships always start at the highest level, cannot fire until they've reached the bottom-most of the four levels and, after crossing the screen, always re-emerge on the same side as before.

The different makes of the Intellivision ships always appear four of the same kind in a row, and always in the same order, though not always from the same sides. The sequencing changes on Day Ten. The various Atari vessels also appear in random sequence, though there is never a Bandit in the first wave. Likewise, they enter the playfield from different sides in each wave or game.

Strategies

Graphics aside — those of the Intellivision edition are markedly better — gameplay is similar save for two points:

1. The trajectory of missiles in the Atari version cannot be altered. They leave the guns at a forty-five degree angle. In the Intellivision edition, trajectory can be set at any angle.

2. The Sentinel Saucer is a far more challenging and versatile means of combat than the Acropolis Command Post.

The goal in both games is to keep the Gorgon ships from reaching the lowest level.

In the Atari version, the ships speed up in every wave beyond two. It's wise in these later waves *not* to fire at a fast-moving ship on the top level. Prepare for it to emerge on the second level, then pick it off. If you miss on top with your hastily-launched shot, you'll not have reloaded in time to catch it on the second level. You'll tend to panic, since other ships are appearing by now: in the heat of your trepidation, if you miss on the third level, then on the next pass they drop bombs on your city. You'll only have a slim chance, then, of picking it off as it passes over the gun on that side.

Better to plan one good shot than take two in desperation!

If your aim is off, and a ship — such as the fleet-moving Bandit — manages to make it past the second level, that is the ship on which you must concentrate your fullest attention. Disregard the other vessels passing above in different directions, tempting targets all, and hit it before it drills one of your structures.

The *exception* is when one of the faster ships appears, threatening to outrace your targeted vessel. In that case, pick off the lowest of the two and, rather than try to "shoot from the hip" at the rapidly approaching craft, note the side from which it has come. You'll have no choice then but to arm the Sentry Post on that side and attempt to pick off the ship the instant it appears on the third or fourth level.

If sheer numbers of Gorgons overwhelm you for whatever reason, seek out a Bandit. Even if you must sacrifice a city to a lower ship, wait until the Bandit is about to drop to a new level and blast it when it emerges.

Remember: blow *it* from the sky, and all the other ships, high and low, go with it.

Intellivision's gameplay is slightly more complicated.

Always open the hostilities with the flying Sentinel Saucer. You'll score quickly, garnering impressive numbers. Don't allow your ship to stray far from the vertical center of the field: if you are too close to one side and an enemy vessel emerges, it may collide with you, costing ten seconds on your clock.

Playing the center is not only safe, it saves time. If you miss a ship coming one way, fire after it as it departs.

On the opening round of the first wave, when all the ships emerge from the same *level,* if not the same side, stay in position — approximately one inch from the top of the game field — and blast them one after the other until the next breed of fighter attacks.

Return the Saucer to its base when the warning buzzer sounds, which occurs at four seconds to zero. Thereafter, send it skyward only during daylight or dusk raids: the danger of collision at nighttime is too great to risk liftoff.

Don't bother with the Sentinel Saucer unless it has at least twenty seconds of fuel. Anything less isn't worth the effort, since Gorgon ships will still be pouring onto the screen as you glide skyward or come in for a landing. Allowing them to accumulate for the sake of a few Saucer shots is not wise.

Using the crosshairs also requires vertical center strategy. You will be required to fire where you think the ship will be a few moments hence: it takes an average of one second for a missile to travel from a Sentry Post to the crosshairs.

If you fire where the ship *is,* it will be gone by the time the projectile arrives.

Anticipating the movements of some of the enemy vessels is not easy. Each fleet of four ships in any given wave has its own unique attack pattern. Some soar straight across the field at a constant speed, others bob like — well, just like Spider Fighters. Still others employ stop-and-go tactics, meaning that you may calculate your launch based on its rate of speed when the ship first appears, only to have the craft slow or accelerate.

Dealing with the latter is the diciest of all. Whether you're using Saucer or crosshairs, best to hover, again, two inches from the top, vertical center, and fire two salvos when the enemy comes within two inches of your position. Whatever speed they travel, a detonation at that proximity will usually destroy them.

As a rule, the best way to begin play is to gun down the first fleet of the wave with your Sentinel Saucer, then use it to take out one or two bobbing craft in the second fleet.

Land and recharge, allowing the Sentry Posts to continue the battle.

Position the crosshairs approximately two inches from the top of the picture. Using the left or right Sentry Post, fire at the dancing ships when they are approximately an inch-and-a-half from the crosshairs. They, and the missile, should intersect.

Once again, keep in mind that the exploding missiles have a fairly wide radius, consuming ships which are even on the periphery of the blast.

In subsequent waves, keep the Sentinel Saucer aloft as much as possible, following the restrictions set out above.

If in *any* wave the Intellivision screen becomes too full of ships, and one or more is dangerously close to the lower level, move the crosshair to the vertical side of the screen from which the lowest ship will emerge. Position the sight halfway between the surface of the water and the top of the field.

Watch the lowest-flying enemy ship and it *alone* as it passes from the far side of the screen: fire two blasts as it is exiting the screen. Your exploding missiles will cross the ship's flight path when it re-emerges onto the screen.

Fighting the nighttime battles requires much the same ploys, with one difference: your only guide to a ship's location is its brief passage through one of the two crisscrossing spotlights. Play the vertical center as much as possible, though if you lose a ship you must be prepared to spot it in the beacon and, moving your crosshairs into position, strike at it more-or-less blind. Remember, they're moving just as they did in the daylight: shoot along their standard flight patterns, don't just litter the skies with flak.

There are some players who feel that if a ship gets away, it is best to sacrifice a portion of your city rather than pursue it at the cost of allowing other ships onto the field. That's the attitude of a loser.

The Intellivision version does not replace damaged sections of Atlantis and, sooner or later, those compromises will cost you the game. Let *on* Gorgon fulfill its mission of annihilation!

Comment

Imagic has done a tremendous job of packing good play value into both versions. Remarkably, with the exception of the less detailed graphics, there isn't a sense of "compromise" in the Atari version: each edition has something to offer that the other does not.

Intellivision gives greater detail in Atlantis itself and more varied gameplay — different flight patterns, the Saucer/crosshair modes, the day and night skies.

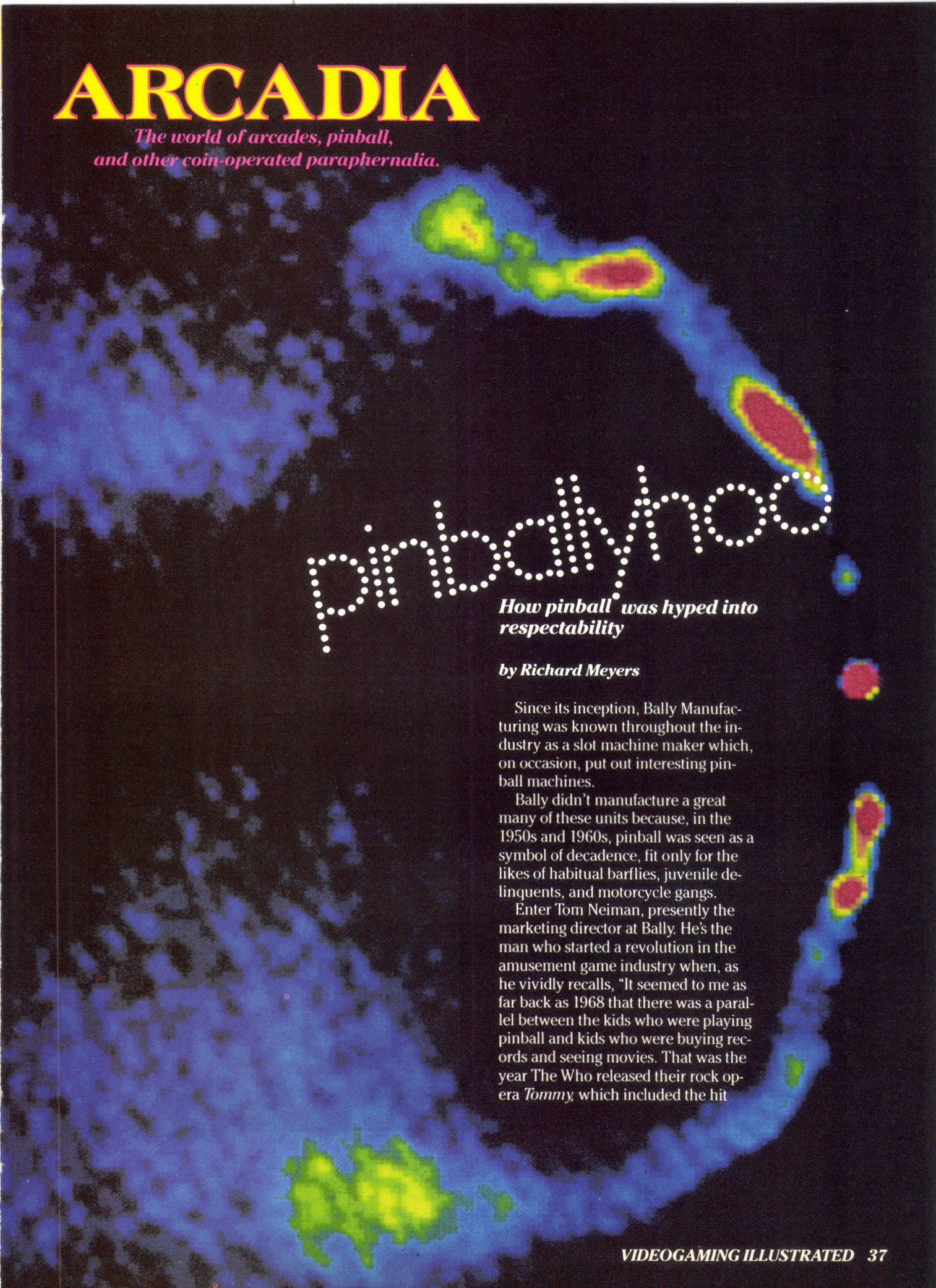
However, Atari provides *faster* play, the ships literally zipping across the screen and forcing impulsive, missed shots. It also serves up a graphic more impressive than any single facet of the Intellivision cartridge, the dazzling explosion of the Bandit.

A less tangible benefit of the Atari games is knowing that if you reach certain scoring plateaus, you will have razed sections of city restored. This factor gets the juices flowing, compelling you to greater achievement than you might otherwise attain.

Videogamers who own both units will want to own both games.▲

ARCADIA

The world of arcades, pinball, and other coin-operated paraphernalia.



pinbalyno

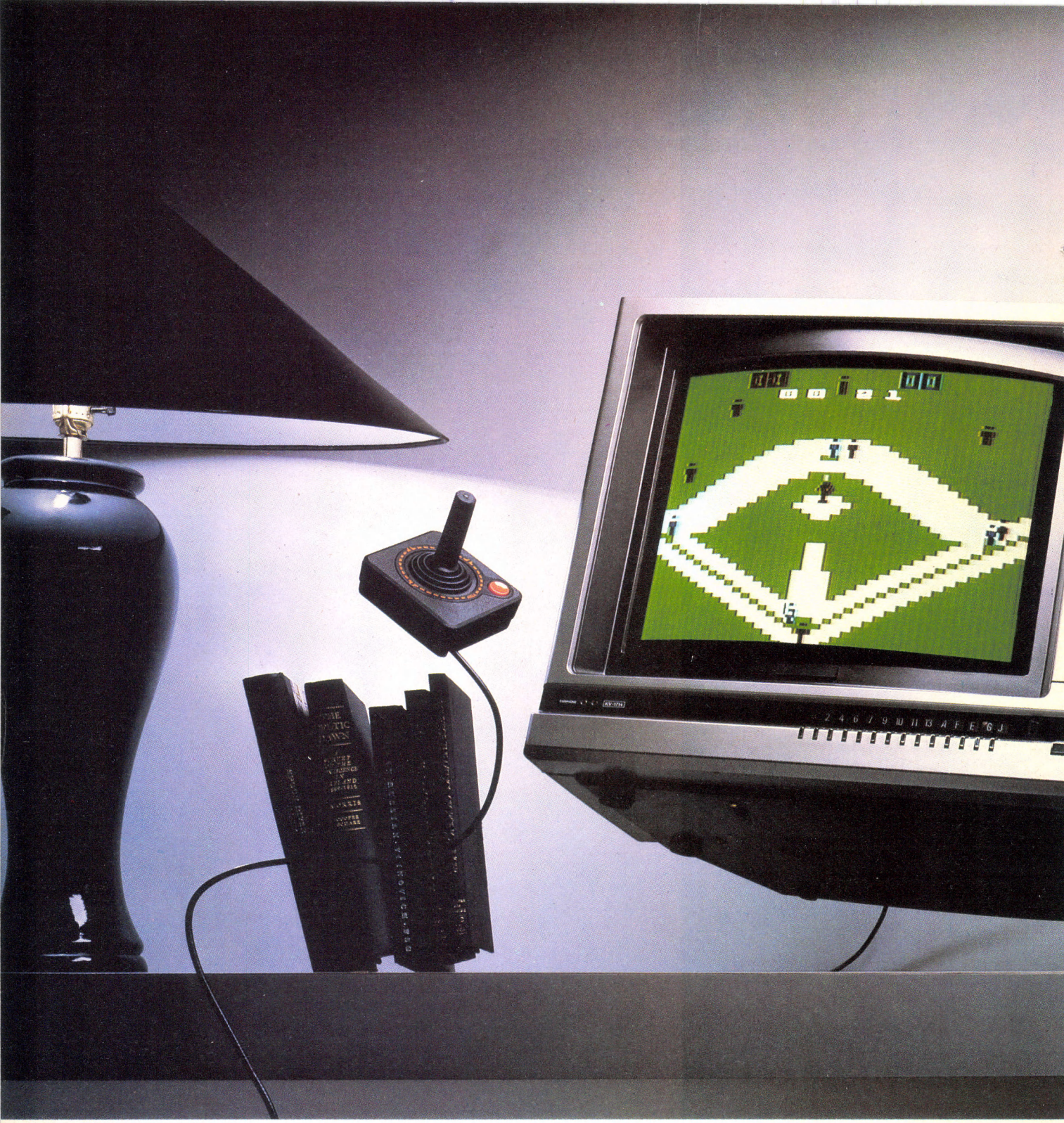
How pinball was hyped into respectability

by Richard Meyers

Since its inception, Bally Manufacturing was known throughout the industry as a slot machine maker which, on occasion, put out interesting pinball machines.

Bally didn't manufacture a great many of these units because, in the 1950s and 1960s, pinball was seen as a symbol of decadence, fit only for the likes of habitual barflies, juvenile delinquents, and motorcycle gangs.

Enter Tom Neiman, presently the marketing director at Bally. He's the man who started a revolution in the amusement game industry when, as he vividly recalls, "It seemed to me as far back as 1968 that there was a parallel between the kids who were playing pinball and kids who were buying records and seeing movies. That was the year The Who released their rock opera *Tommy*, which included the hit



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Capt. Fantastic:
Elton John himself took a hand in promoting the* Capt. Fantastic *game, which included attention-getting sparkling mirror lines on the backglass.

Pinball Wizardess Ann-Margaret shows off the first, great "tie-in" machine, a huge success spawned by the Who's rock opera* Tommy *and director Ken Russell's movie version.

song "Pinball Wizard." I thought it was a natural to start packaging and promoting games based on this and other youth-oriented properties."

Neiman went to various companies with his idea to do a pinball game based on *Tommy*, but no one was biting. Then, in 1974, he went to work for Bally. He tried to sell them on the idea. "I had always felt that "Pinball Wizard" was a natural for them, since it contained the lyric, 'I thought I was the Bally table king, but I just handed my pinball crown to him.' Since the company's name was in the song, it seemed obvious to me that it was in their best interest to take advantage of it."

No one at the company saw it quite that way though. Fortunately, that was the year Columbia Pictures announced their film version of the rock opera. Neiman got the go-ahead to at least approach Columbia with the idea for the game; he met with executive Barry Laurie, who was thrilled with the idea and gave Bally an inexpensive license to produce a machine based on the film. All Neiman had to do now was convince his still-skeptical superiors.

"I had a tougher sale on my end than I'd had on the other," he admits. "I'd say, 'The Who' and they'd say, 'the who?' It was like an Abbott and Costello routine. Finally, they gave their reluctant approval along with a very limited budget to develop the game."

Neiman's efforts resulted in *Wizard*, the first tie-in pinball machine and one of the highlights in pinball history. It went on to become the most successful machine the industry had seen to date. One reason for this was the anticipation which had been bred in music fans. They had heard the machine was coming and, anxious to emulate the character in the rock opera, were begging arcade owners to offer *Wizard*. That put Bally in the enviable position of simply having to supply games rather than solicit orders. A record number of pinball machines were hurriedly put into the marketplace.

"I've always thought that the whole purpose of doing a tie-in was to take an inanimate object like a game and give it a personality," Neiman explains. "Into this game we infused the personality of the rock opera. It's amazing how much our artist captured the film's ambiance, considering how little we had to go on. We only saw a few stills and read the script, but we were able to anticipate what the film would be like. We rode the coat-tails of Columbia's big publicity budget." Having the film's co-star Ann-Margaret pose with the machine didn't hurt.

The machine made an awesome profit for Bally and, while the players were standing up and feeding quarters into the machine, Bally executives were standing up and taking notice.

"When my boss came to me and said, 'Well, what are you going to do next?', I was at a loss," Neiman grants. "I had always envisioned *Wizard* as a one-shot deal. I didn't think of myself as a marketing genius, I just thought I was doing the obvious." What was obvious was that Neiman had a tough act to follow, but follow it he did.

Neiman went back to *Tommy* in search of inspiration. He found that the one image which had made the greatest impression on audiences was the bespectacled Elton John in gigantic shoes playing pinball and singing the "Bally table" song. Rather than do another *Tommy* game, which would have been dated by the passing of the film, Neiman went after an Elton John game.

"I made an appeal to him directly," Neiman reveals, "and after a long talk had him saying, 'I love it. I *want* it!' And at that time, what Elton wanted, Elton got."

The game was *Capt. Fantastic (and the Brown Dirt Cowboy)*, based on one of John's bestselling albums. In the jargon of the music trade, the game became Bally's second monster-hit in a row.

"There were always people who played pinball," explains Allan Reizman, one of Bally's engineers. "But they were the hardcore followers, the ones that went to the local bar to play. There had been no mass-acceptance. But in the mid-seventies, when we introduced these games which had universal appeal, there were pinball machines popping up all over the place: in drugstores, candy shops, even in peoples' homes. It no longer had that stigma of being cheap and dirty." True enough: in fact, one of the stipulations in Elton John's contract was that part of his payment be made in Bally pinball machines.

Neiman picks up the story from there. "All of a sudden we were the 'in' thing,' which all the young people wanted to play, all the jet-setters wanted to own. Doors that were closed before were thrown wide open."

The marketing man walked right through those open doors — finding himself smack in the middle of the Playboy Mansion. "I was looking for different markets to tap after the music successes," he notes, "and I thought the *Playboy* lifestyle was a natural to try and woo the over-eighteen audience."

It was much more of a natural than Neiman expected, since the czar of the Bunny empire was a pinball enthusiast himself.

"As far as Hugh Hefner was concerned," states Neiman, "the *Playboy* pinball machine had to be. He was interested to the point of conducting all the negotiating and being personally involved in all the design work. Every meeting had to include him, and he sat there in his silk pajamas, on the floor of the mansion, contributing ideas right and left. It really astounded me."

The machine which evolved from these meetings astounded a lot of arcade owners as well, with returns which showed that something slightly risque could work without chucking pinball back into the dark ages of disrepute.

While Bally pursued new directions such as this, they didn't forsake their profitable roots in music: the *Kiss* machine perpetuated their record of success, as Allan Reizman details.

"Anyone who has ever seen this rock group in concert understands how their act lends itself to pinball art and design. You can do a lot with a group that features fire and explosions onstage. That was probably our most successful game from a sales perspective. The group came in and posed for pictures and backed the game one hundred percent. We got a tremendous amount of publicity on that one."

The rock and roll world fanned the flames of the pinball parlors until Bally's competition could no longer ignore the company's huge profits. Suddenly, Neiman's intimate, inexpensive approach to obtaining licenses was shattered by a bidding war as other companies made rock stars and music personalities high-priced offers they couldn't refuse. Meanwhile, Neiman continued looking for new ground to break.

At first glance, the *Harlem*

Globetrotters machine seemed to be Bally's attempt to corner the black market, but Neiman says it just isn't so. "I had been criticized numerous times for going after faces that were too provincial," he contends. "I was, in fact, doing mostly American tie-ins even though Europe comprised nearly fifty percent of our market.

"Our European representatives were complaining that we should do a great German soccer star or something, so I went looking for a personality with worldwide appeal. We were thinking of Muhammad Ali, but Stern wound up with him. Believe it or not, the Harlem Globetrotters tested best in all my research. I couldn't go anywhere in the world where the basketball team wasn't known and loved."

Speaking of criticism, in addition to being chastised for catering to the American market, Bally caught flak because they'd never featured a female as the lead character in a pinball game. "That," smiles Neiman, "is what drove me to go after Dolly Parton. I had always wanted to do a country western theme, and she was the field's most popular female star. At the time, I was trying to decide whether to go ahead with an *Urban Cowboy* machine. I wasn't sure how the film would do, and felt Dolly had sufficient appeal; we went with Dolly."

In the telling, Neiman and his associates made the correct choice. In fact, the game was a bust. "We had a problem with Dolly in that she decided to change her image right in the middle of production. She seemed to want to go from Loretta Lynn to Ann-Margaret overnight, leaving our country western theme in the dust.

"It wasn't what I wanted to do, but we were so deeply committed to the machine that I had to work something out. I had at least three meetings with Dolly, who turned out to be a truly wonderful lady. However, she had a definite concept of how she wanted to be portrayed — less country and more Vegas — which resulted in our altering the backglass painting dramatically while maintaining the western-style playing field." The divergent styles clashed horribly.

Although as entertaining a game as many of its predecessors, the *Dolly Parton* machine was not a success. The different look of the field and backglass cannot be blamed entirely: one suspects that, in the end, having

One good thing leads to another in the pinball tie-in arcade. First, Bally put out the* Kiss *machine. Soon Stern had a rock 'n' roll winner based on the name and fame of Ted* Nugent. *Bally had some trouble designing their* Dolly Parton *machine since they were a little bit country and the singer herself wanted to go pop; but that didn't stop Gottlieb from getting some girls of their own — namely* Charlie's Angels. *Then Bally made a deal with Paramount Pictures to do a* Star Trek *the Motion Picture game. Gottlieb had a much easier go on the* Close Encounters of the Third Kind *since it was produced by the pinball manufacturer's parent company: Columbia Pictures.

Dolly watch over the macho-aware players as they went down in flames intimidated them.

But Dolly's failure was not Bally's only problem. The company was for a time fielding accusations that their new *Eight Ball* machine was using Henry Winkler's "Fonzie" likeness without permission.

"It would be tough for me to argue that the character as pictured wasn't 'Fonzie-ish'," Neiman acknowledges. But the character from *Happy Days* was, itself, inspired by a long line of leather-jacket characters, and the issue was not pressed beyond a lot of saber-rattling. "Besides," says Neiman, "we had signed with Paramount to do a game based on their *Star Trek: the Motion Picture,* and even though they were the producers and copyright holders on *Happy Days,* they weren't inclined to do anything to unduly strain our relationship."

Unfortunately, the happy days of the tie-in bonanza were ending. Two factors were to blame: prices for licenses were accelerating due to competition between manufacturers, and the market was becoming glutted with tie-in machines. And while many were good, some even exceptional, most were sadly inferior.

Atari, who would just as soon forget their pinball experience, released a wide-body *Superman* game. So infamous is that machine that many people on Atari's staff aren't even aware that the company had ever done pinball machines. Although their design and concepts were audaciously entertaining, what really did them in was their maintenance record. That, in pinball as in videogames, is equivalent to the death sentence.

Meanwhile, Stern, in addition to *Ali,* put out a Ted Nugent machine called *Nugent,* one which was plugged in *Playboy, Oui, .Circus,* and other magazines, yet was simply too mediocre to light many fans' fires. All too often, as in this case, there was little imagination applied to the tie-in. Gameplay failed to invoke the subject the way *Wizard* had, the only thing these machines having in common with their tie-ins being the artwork. The playing fields, as in *Nugent,* tended to be predictable, boring rehashes of prior games. Considering some of the titles Stern had to play with on *Nugent* — such as "Cat Scratch Fever" and "Double Live Gonzo" — there was a severe

failure of imagination.

Bally's biggest competitor in this field was Gottlieb, who learned from their mistakes as well as from those of others. After a few missteps, they put out a superior product.

Charlie's Angels, released in 1978, wasn't one of these, one of their first tie-ins and a floundering game-playing experience. In a word, the whole affair was drab. Likewise the James Bond machine. Despite a clever timer feature which allowed the skillful player to continue almost indefinitely, the pinball unit was undermined by a flat, unappealing backglass and an all too empty playing field.

Gottlieb enjoyed greater success the following year with their cartoon-oriented machines. *The Incredible Hulk* and *The Amazing Spider-man,* based on the Marvel Comics characters, as well as the *Pink Panther* were machines which utilized far more individualistic gameplay. They were very successful among pinball players, and the familiarity of the characters attracted their fans to the field.

Simultaneously, Columbia Pictures licensed the rights to two films to Gottlieb: *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger.* The latter was made available in a variety of formats: a four-player electronic version, a four-player electro-mechanical edition, and a lesser-known two-player electro-mechanical style simply called *Eye of the Tiger.*

That last machine is not to be confused with Gottlieb's latest and finest tie-in, *Rocky.* Although "Eye of the Tiger" is the theme song from *Rocky III,* the pinball games incorporates motifs from the three boxing sagas. The audience for the game was tailor-made: the pinball machine was actually featured in the opening sequence of the screen's most recent Italian Stallion installment.

In the meantime, however, groundbreaker Bally hasn't been letting astroturf grow under its feet. They've found a perfect superstar tie-in in their own backyard, namely *Mr. and Mrs. Pac-Man.* The success of this game is especially rewarding, on the heels of their best-looking but perhaps least popular tie-in, *Flash Gordon,* which was based on the unsuccessful science fiction film and was lost in the ever-increasing numbers of machines.

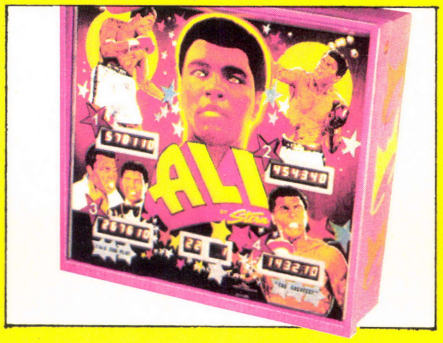
"Future tie-ins have to be perfect," Neiman maintains. "At the zenith of the tie-in craze we used to be able to do marginal properties like *The Six Million Dollar Man* and make a profit. The only reason we did that one was because it was a good hook on which to hang a six-player game. I don't think that Lee Majors was even aware that the game existed; compare that to how things were when we worked hand-in-hand with Elton John and Dolly Parton.

"What we need now are more games like *Mr. and Mrs. Pac-Man* or *Space Invaders,* properties which allow us to transform presold and well-known videogame themes into successful pinball machines. Or *Tron,* which was a natural for our videogame division. I told Walt Disney Productions from the very beginning, 'Our game will out-gross the picture.' Sadly for them, it looks like I was right."

The tie-in pinball machines succeeded in giving the industry credence in the eyes of the establishment. But Bally isn't, nor could it afford to be, a laurels-sitter. "We're kicking around some very interesting ideas," Neiman reveals, "some of them quite innovative. Your readers will be hearing about them very soon."

Keep your eyes open and quarters at the ready: as we've said before, the pinball era is far from over.

No stone was left unturned in the search for tie-in success. Gottlieb did well with their* Spider-Man *and* Rocky *games, but the other superheroes and boxers fell on hard times. Stern's* Ali *was not the greatest and Bally's* Flash Gordon *suffered the film version's bad reviews. But rising above them all is Bally/Midway's* Tron *which not only is the most successful tie-in but is out-grossing the movie upon which it is based!



conquering:

Kangaroo

by Randy Palmer

© Field Enterprises, Inc., 1982

***Lace up your boxing gloves, it's time to out-fox and out-box Atari's* Kangaroo.**

KANGAROO is comprised of four screens, each a multi-level structure brimming with valuable fruit and deadly, apple-throwing Monkeys. The object is to help the boxing Kangaroo to save her baby who is imprisoned in a tiny cage, usually near the top of the screen.

The player controls the Kangaroo's movements by manipulating a three-function joystick and a "Punch" button which causes the Kangaroo to extend a mighty limb, thereby kayoing the enemy confronting it.

The versatile joystick functions as follows (see diagram):

To move the Kangaroo right or left, push the joystick to either side.

To crouch or duck, pull the stick down.

To jump, push the stick up.

To make a Super-Leap, push the stick to either side at a forty-five degree angle.

The joystick in *Kangaroo* is very sensitive, and it's easy to make a mistake.

For instance, if you want to move to the right, you may instead make a "super-leap" if you're not careful. The best way to keep things under control is to keep a tight grip on the joystick, pulling it *slightly* downward at all times except when jumping or leaping. When you want to make a jump, push the joystick up sharply, then quickly bring it back to its original position. Otherwise, the Kangaroo may jump several times in a row, making it an easy target for the apples and cores thrown by the mischievous Monkeys.

Scoring

Points are acquired by crossing or jumping to pick up various pieces of fruit which decorate the screen, and kayoing the Monkeys.

The fruit-points are as follows:

Strawberry — 100 points
Tomato — 200 points
Cherries — 400 points
Pineapple — 800 points

Pieces of fruit are advanced to the next-highest value by having the Kangaroo jump up and ring the Bell. There is one Bell on each screen.

Ringing the Bell, however, will only advance those pieces of fruit which have already been "plucked."

For each Monkey knocked down, the player is awarded 200 points. If you manage to hit an Apple in midair, 100 points are awarded. Hitting a falling Apple *Core* is worth 200 points.

In Screen Three, each Monkey punched out of the "Monkey Column" is worth 400 points. Successfully hitting the Big Ape is worth 800 points.

Kangaroo also awards players Bonus Points at the end of each round. This may mean anywhere from 100 points to 2,000 points, depending on how fast a screen is completed.

Screen One

Don't pass up any fruit. Always take the time to make a jump or Super-Leap to get it — and the points that go with it.

Try to use a super-leap to get at the fruit unless it happens to be hanging directly over a ladder. Standing in place and jumping wastes precious seconds while the bonus points dwindle away.

Don't go for fruit when a Monkey is about to toss an Apple. If you do, you may find that the Kangaroo lands not on its feet, but on the Apple. Consequence: you've lost one of your allotted marsupials.

Punch out any Monkeys that you encounter along the way to the top of the screen. Ascend ladders without hesitation.

When a Monkey throws an Apple, the player must either jump *over* the Apple or *duck* it, depending on the height of the Apple. Some will be thrown low to the ground and must be jumped; others will travel at a higher level and must be ducked or punched. Until you are experienced at the game, it's best to duck the high apples instead of throwing a punch at them.

Bonus Points are not the richest commodity in *Kangaroo's* first screen. Go for the fruit and kayo the Monkeys. Try to reach the Bell, ring it, then turn around to pick up the new fruit.

Not all of the fruit has to be picked up to advance them to the next point value. You can easily ring the Bell after picking up 100 points for a Strawberry, and return to pick up 200 points for the Tomato which will appear. Ring the Bell again, go back and pick up the Cherries; ring it again and return to pick the Pineapple. The Bell will then disappear, and you've scored 1,500 points without much effort at all. Add to that the points you won on the way up, and you've already broken what might be earned through Bonus Points by racing to the top!

The falling Apple Cores are relatively easy targets; go for them. Stand a safe distance away, for if they strike the Kangaroo it's a goner; time your punch and hit the Core as it plunges by.

Above all, keep your eyes on the Monkeys as much as possible. You don't have to watch the Kangaroo to know where it's moving. But you *do* have to be ready to jump, duck or punch the Apples as they come your way.

Lastly, be careful when moving up the final ladder to rescue Baby 'Roo. A stray Apple Core may bonk its mother on the head! Wait at the bottom of the ladder — with an eye to the side, watching those Monkeys — until the baby is headed toward the *right* side of his cage. Then move up the ladder to complete the screen.

Screen Two

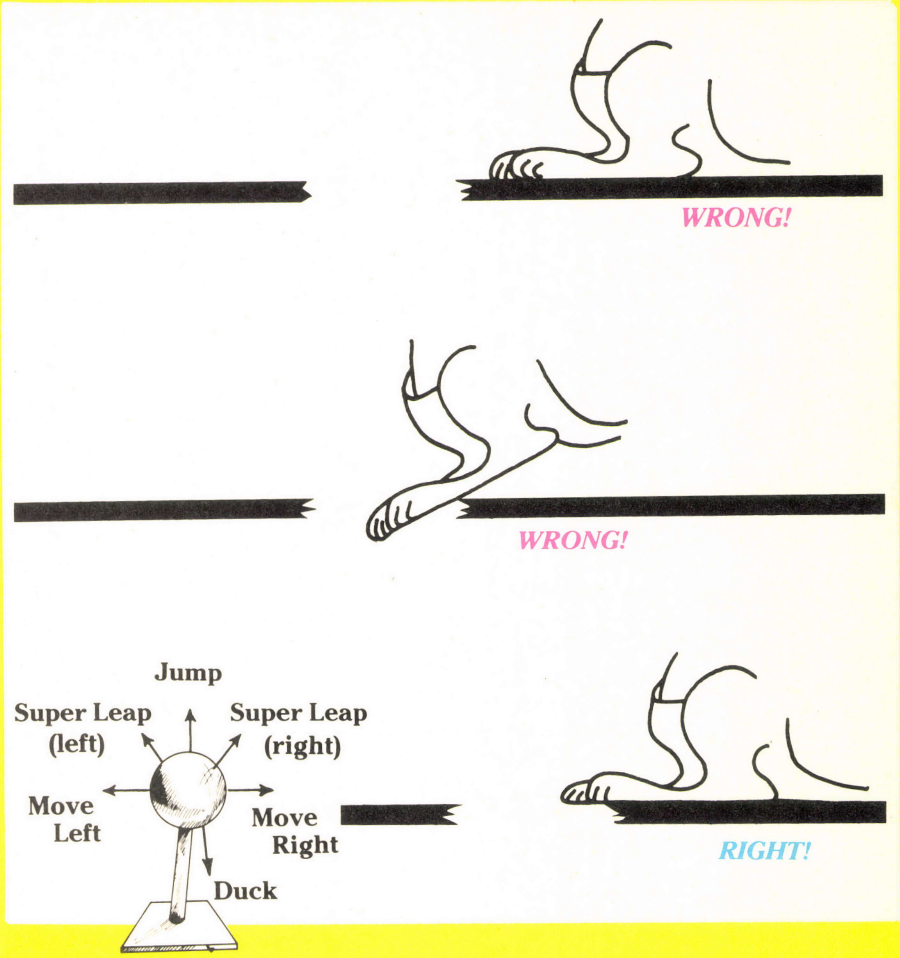
Again, the player must reach the topmost portion of the screen to save Baby 'Roo. This is the first screen, however, in which there are *gaps* along the way through which the Kangaroo may fall.

Because this screen is fairly hazardous, it's best to concentrate on kayoing the Monkeys and getting to the top, rather than ringing the Bell and going back and forth, up and down, to pick up high-value Fruit.

To get the Kangaroo successfully across the lethal gaps, the player must use the Super-Leap function. Even then, however, the danger is not over. Even when using Super-Leap, the Kangaroo still does not make *too* great a leap. If

your timing is not spot-on, she may plummet to her death.

To cross a gap, wait until the Kangaroo's feet are dangling just a bit over the edge — *then* push the joystick into the Super-Leap mode. The Kangaroo will make it safely to the other side. But be cautious! The animal will fall through the gap if its toes dangle *too* far over the ledge! See the diagram for guidelines.



Screen 3

The "Monkey Column" is the main feature of this screen. The statuesque Monkeys must be punched out from beneath each other so that the cage in which Baby 'Roo is imprisoned can come down to ground level.

It takes several punches to knock a Monkey from the column. Meanwhile, your Kangaroo will be assailed by falling Apple Cores and tossed Apples. Watch out for them! You'll be required to do quite a bit of jumping and ducking in this screen.

Ignore the Fruit on Screen 3 and concentrate on knocking away the Monkey Column. As a Monkey is pushed from the Column, any approaching Monkey — they will approach from the *right* side of the screen — can be kayoed if the Monkey from the Column is pushed out at the *same time* another Monkey approaches.

You'll manage to beat apart the Column a lot faster if you *let go* of the joystick and place one hand on *each* of the two Punch Buttons. Tap each one rapidly in succession, as if you were playing a set of bongo drums. Just be prepared to grab the joystick when you see an Apple being thrown your way. It might take a little practice to get good at this maneuver, but it's worth it.

As you club the Monkeys from the Column, other Monkeys will move across the board to replace them. You'll always be ahead of them as long as you keep punching.

When there is just one Monkey left in the Column, it's not necessary to knock it away. Simply grab the joystick and Super-Leap up onto the platform. You've saved Baby 'Roo again!

Screen 4

The last screen. After this, *Kangaroo* goes to Difficulty Level Two, and repeats the previous screens at a more trying pace.

Once again you must ascend ladders to reach the top of the screen. Only this time, our Simian friends can move up and down the ladders, something they weren't able to do before.

Use the utmost caution when climbing the ladders of Screen Four. Monkeys will toss Apples from the side or from above, and it is impossible to leap or duck while on a ladder. Move as quickly as possible to the top. Take the route of the Fruit, but don't go out of your way for it. The most important thing now is to *survive.*

Rotten Apples

One thing to keep in mind throughout all four screens in *Kangaroo:* stay a safe distance from Monkeys who are preparing to throw Apples. If the Kangaroo is perched right next to them, there will be no time for the player to see whether an Apple is being thrown at middle or low level. Leave sufficient distance so that you can make a determination.

Also, don't "jump the gun" when preparing to dodge an Apple. If you duck before the Apple is thrown, it will home right in on the Kangaroo — unless it's far enough away from the Monkey that you can subsequently make a jump — and vice versa.

The Big Ape

Dallying too long on one screen will result in the Monkeys calling on their "big brother" to beat you up! The Big Ape is fitted with boxing gloves . . . and he has a mean reach!

Stay a safe distance from Big. Wait until he throws a punch, then move in quickly and swat him. He'll be knocked down clear across the screen and into the circuitry!

Fortunately, being punched by the big guy doesn't kill the Kangaroo, but her boxing gloves will be bandaged, thus hampering her skill to effectively deal a knock-out punch.

In Conclusion

One word of caution: *Kangaroo looks* easy, but it isn't. You'll be tripped up by those devilish little Monkeys more than once.

Don't let them get you down! Just take the megrims on the chin and, as that popular boxer of last summer would say:

"Go for it!"▲

conquering:

Dig-Dug

How to inflate your foes* and *your ego

by Chris Ochsenkiel

There has been an increase in the amount of maze games introduced since *Pac-man* became the most popular game in the nation.

One of the most recent and popular games in this style is *Dig-Dug,* which was created to dig its way into your heart, and has dug deep into our pockets.

The object of *Dig-Dug* is to guide a little figure in an asbestos suit through the ground to kill Fygars and Pookas before they reach you. Fygars are little green dragons that breath deadly fire and are worth 200 to 1,000 points when blown up. Pookas are little orange monsters worth 200 to 500 points when blown up.

There are two ways to kill the monsters.

The first and most obvious way is to run up to a monster and pump him up. This is accomplished by rapidly pushing the pump button while running forward. Continue doing this until the enemy blows up. When having at the monsters, be sure not to let any of them touch you because: they kill on contact. Only when the monsters are partially or fully inflated is it possible to run through them without getting killed.

The second and most profitable way to kill the monsters is to dig a tunnel up under a rock and drop that rock on as

many monsters as possible — as long as you remember to move out of the way of the falling rock.

I. you do not move from under the rock quickly enough, you may be crushed along with any monsters beneath you. Players receive no extra points for their own death; however, you will still receive points for any monsters that are killed with you under the rock.

The most important aspect to playing *Dig-Dug* is to develop patterns for the many different board configurations. You will find that if you move in a certain direction and kill a couple of monsters under a rock, the tack will work exactly the same way on the next game you play. Because of this predictability, it is a simple matter to develop patterns for even the most highest rounds of the game.

A few patterns for beginners are offered on page 60.

Extra Figures

On most *Dig-Dug* machines three figures are given to you with a bonus life at 10,000, 40,000, and every 40,000 points afterwards. However, some *Dig-Dug* machines are set for free figures every 70,000 points. If you run up against a machine set at that difficult, you probably will not be digging through the dirt for very long unless you are already a skilled player.

If you were to go all the way to 880,000 points without losing a figure, you would have a total of 26 diggers. This is the maximum amount the game allows.

Keep in mind that even though only nine figures will be shown on the bottom of the screen, any extras you have earned during your game will be kept in the computer's memory.

Vegetables

A very important aspect of playing a high scoring game of *Dig-Dug* is to run over the various vegetables that appear in the center of the screen. In order for the vegetable to appear on any given round, you must drop two rocks and then head for the center of the screen for your bonus points.

You receive an ever-increasing amount of bonus points for the vegetables as the rounds progress. It is especially important for *Dig-Dug* to eat his vegetables in the later rounds when you want big points in one easy gulp.

The following chart shows the vegetables names, amount of points they are worth, and the rounds in which they appear.

Rounds	Vegetables	Points
1	Carrot	400
2	Rutabaga	600
3	Mushroom	800
4	Cucumber	1,000
5	Cucumber	1,000
6	Egg Plant	2,000
7	Egg Plant	2,000
8	Bell Pepper	3,000
9	Bell Pepper	3,000
10	Tomato	4,000
11	Tomato	4,000
12	Onion	5,000
13	Onion	5,000
14	Watermelon	6,000
15	Watermelon	6,000
16	Galaxian	7,000
17	Galaxian	7,000
18 and above	Pineapple	8,000

Keep in mind that when you drop the second rock on any given round, the vegetable will appear for exactly ten seconds. Try to position yourself so that when you do drop the second rock you will have a reasonable chance of hurrying to center-screen to receive your bonus.

Dropping Rocks

The best and easiest way to kill monsters on any given round is to drop a rock on them. Many of my patterns involve dropping rocks on large amounts of monsters. This technique is very valuable in the later stages of the game.

The chart below shows the amount of bonus points awarded for dropping a rock on various numbers of monsters.

Monsters Devastated	Bonus Points
1	1,000
2	2,500
3	4,000
4	6,000
5	8,000
6	10,000
7	12,000
8	15,000

Some of my more advanced patterns involve dropping a single rock on at least six or seven monsters. This kind of strategy is necessary if you hope to score over 2,000,000 pts. with *Dig-Dug*.

Dirt Layers

There are four different dirt layers on the *Dig-Dug* playfield. These layers of dirt are directly related to the amount of points you receive when blowing up different monsters from various directions.

The Pookas are worth the same amount of points regardless of the direction from which you blow them up. You will receive a maximum of 500 points for popping a Pooka while it is in the bottom dirt layer. If you blow up a Pooka in the top dirt layer, you will receive 200 points, the second dirt layer 300 points, and the third dirt layer 400 points.

When blowing up Fygars you will find they are worth the same as Pookas, 200-500 points when blown up vertically. Because the Fygars breathe fire, the game awards double scoring for blowing up Fygars horizontally, the direction in which they exhale flame. It is possible to receive anywhere from 400 to 1,000 points for killing Fygars in this manner.

It is best to take advantage of the lower dirt levels whenever you cannot drop a rock on the monsters.

Rounds

In playing a game of *Dig-Dug* the player will be digging through round after round of different board configurations. Starting with round one and traveling to the end of round eleven, you will find that each board is arranged differently. It is necessary to develop patterns for these first boards, a few of which are suggested in the accompanying screens.

Starting with round twelve *Dig-Dug* becomes slightly easier. The game starts showing a cycle of four different board configurations over and over for the rest of the match. Once patterns are developed for rounds twelve through fifteen you will find that they work the same for the next twenty rounds, at which time the monsters pick up speed and the patterns must be modified to compensate.

Developing patterns is the most important part of playing *Dig-Dug*. Many players, *good* players, have developed a total of twenty-four patterns which is sufficient to take them over the 100th round.

After the 99th round, the round-counter in the lower right-hand corner of the screen goes back to zero. Also, following this round all the flowers you have accumulated at the top of the screen will disappear. When the round-counter is rolled over it does not change

Continued on page 60

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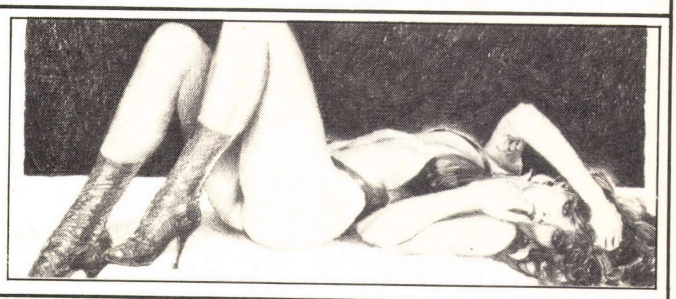

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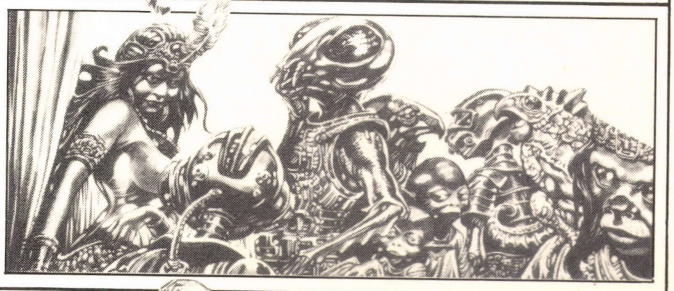

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meet the original...

Dig-Dug

This scrappy hero is not the first to hunt dragons underground

As Dig-Dug, the asbestos-suited hero of the popular arcade game, goes burrowing into the earth, the farthest thing from a player's mind is the burning question, "Just how many people went down there *before* our brave little pumper?"

But now that you're sitting there resting your weary firing finger, let's take some time to dig into just that topic.

Fictitious adventurers have been going inside the earth for ages.

One of the first was the legendary Greek poet Orpheus, who headed into Hades, the abode of the dead, to retrieve his deceased wife from Pluto — the god, not the dog.

Pluto agreed to return the woman if Orpheus could return to the surface without looking back at her. A mere yard or so from journey's end, the poet succumbed to temptation and glanced back; his beloved vanished and he, wretched fellow, was ripped to pieces by attendants of the god Dionysis.

In Dante Alighieri's fourteenth century poem *The Divine Comedy,* Dante and the Roman poet Virgil take a trip to hell where they encounter "a mighty throng (of) grave denizens," though no Fygars.

Closer to the mark was the voyage of Nicholas Klimius who, in *Journey to the World Underground* — written by Danish author Ludvig Baron von Holberg in 1741 — tumbles through a hole and finds all manners of creature living deep in the earth's bowels.

Inarguably, the most famous saga of people visiting the busy insides of our humble planet is Jules Verne's 1864 novel *Journey to the Centre of the Earth.* Maybe some of you have read the book; more than likely you've seen the 1959 film starring James Mason and Pat Boone as the intrepid subterraneans.

David Innes faces big trouble in this drawing by fantasy artist Frank Frazetta. © Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

Surprisingly, Hollywood didn't *pro forma* botch up the tale. In both versions, Professor Lidenbrock and his young nephew Axel descend into a mysterious volcano in Iceland, picking their way through caverns and along streams and eventually making their way to the shores of a sea at the earth's middle.

Within the earth, they meet prehistoric animals including Mastodons (more terrible than Pookas, Verne implies) before being returned to the earth's surface by makeshift "elevator," riding a raft on shafts of volcanic ejecta.

A year later, author Lewis Carroll sent Alice falling down a rabbit hole into Wonderland, but she found no dragons there — only talking turtles and some very angry playing cards.

Right behind Verne's heroes, the most popular explorers of our world's innards were David Innes and Abner Perry, the protagonists of Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Pellucidar" series.

Pellucidar is the world inside the earth, which Innes and Perry reach by tunneling downward in a land submarine called the Iron Mole. In *At the Earth's Core,* written in 1913, we are introduced to the fierce, primitive humans who live down under — not to mention the monsters of various shapes and sizes.

Burroughs continued his inner earth adventures in *Pellucidar* (1915), *Tanar of Pellucidar* (1928), *Tarzan at the Earth's Core* (1929), *Back to the Stone Age* (1935), *The Land of Terror* (1939), and a few short stories. The series was recently continued by author John Eric Holmes with his novel *The Mahars of Pellucidar.*

A series of awful movies based on the novels was released in the middle 1970s.

Speaking of awful, comic books have done their fair share to extend the reaches of our culture into the mysterious world beneath our feet.

The most famous was *Cave Carson: Inside the Earth,* a magazine which prospered briefly in the late 1950s — although every superhero from Marvel's Mighty Thor to Superman has taken a trip through the mucky mantle of earth.

However, the tales which come the closest to providing literary counterparts to the events and characters in *Dig-Dug* are the Middle Earth sagas of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Middle Earth is not really *in* the middle of the earth: it's on the surface. However, inside holes excavated in our globe's cozy crust dwell short (two to four foot tall) little people called Hobbits — who, in the course of ridding their

Continued on page 56

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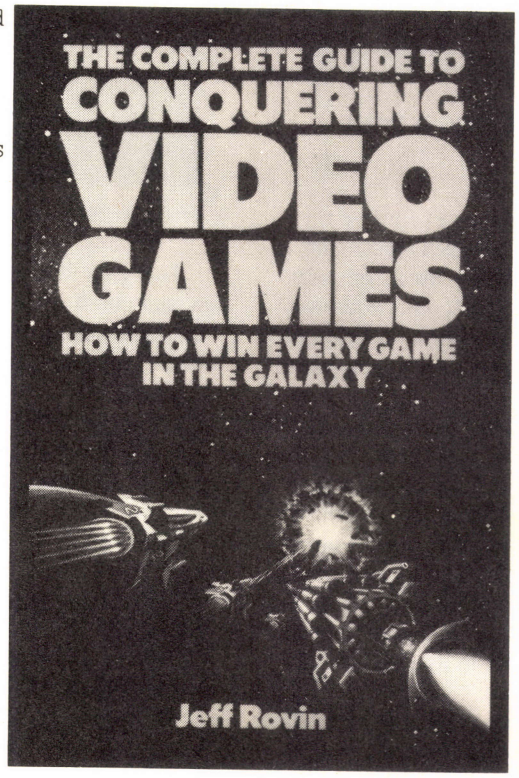

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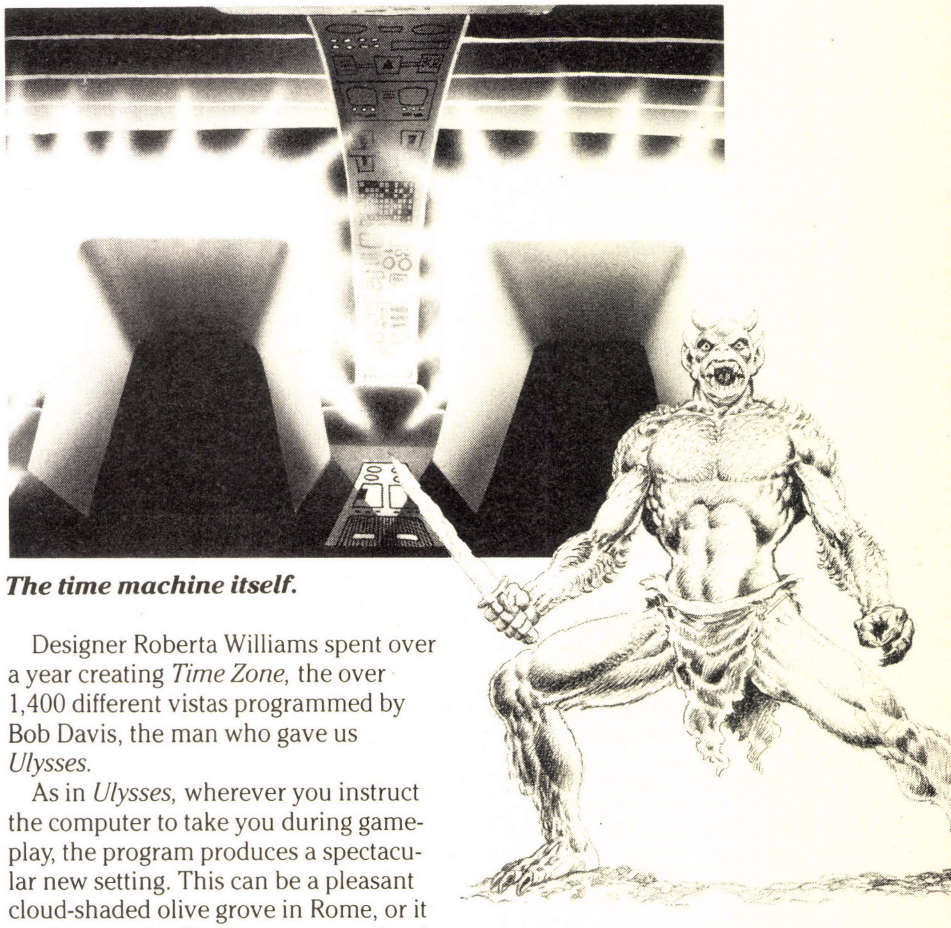
MACMILLAN

Journey from the remote past to the far-flung future in a race to save the earth from annihilation.

TIME ZONE

by Michael Alexander



The time machine itself.

In our last issue, we reported on *Ulysses and the Golden Fleece* and dubbed it one of the finest computer-games on the market. Our faith was not misplaced: the Book of the Month Club is now offering the epic game to its members.

However, if you thrive on sagas, On-Line Systems has a game to give their *Ulysses* effort a run for its money.

One of the interesting facets of playing *Ulysses* night after night, week after week, month-on-end — some of us are still trying to find bloody Pegasus, let alone the Fleece — is that the player really does "get into the head" of the Hellenic figure.

The setting is entirely ancient. The computer becomes invisible, your window into a world where wax and leather are big deals. You can't order them through the Sears Channel, you've got to fight hard for even simple material goods.

You begin to have the values of Ulysses and, hence, begin to think like him.

Time Zone is different. You are *you*, a stranger in many strange lands with your latter twentieth century mentality and values kicked around as you hop from era to era, from nation to nation.

Time Zone is not the kind of game one plays in an afternoon. On-Line believes that most gamers will require nearly a year to complete the adventure.

Designer Roberta Williams spent over a year creating *Time Zone*, the over 1,400 different vistas programmed by Bob Davis, the man who gave us *Ulysses*.

As in *Ulysses*, wherever you instruct the computer to take you during gameplay, the program produces a spectacular new setting. This can be a pleasant cloud-shaded olive grove in Rome, or it can be a murky Cretaceous swampland.

The colors are vivid on a regular TV, though most computergamers seem to prefer the green-and-white crispness of high resolution TV play.

Time Zone is contained on *both* sides of six disks, a tribute to the awesome nature of On-Line's undertaking. The scenario is simple. Eons ago, alien creatures known as Neburites watched humans evolved from the apes. Our ancestors were deemed clever, nothing more, though the aliens continued to watch — just in case we became *too* smart. We changed and grew increasingly more sophisticated, while the Neburites hardly advanced at all, and they continued to watch . . .

By the year 4081, the extraterrestrials have become so insanely jealous of humankind's progress that they decide to crush our race before we can become more powerful than they.

The player's mission is to thwart the alien invasion. To do this, it is necessary to travel through nine time periods, on seven different continents, fortifying yourself in arms (and spirit) for the final conflict.

Travel through time and space is accomplished via a time machine. Seems you've had a dream in which, as the computer puts it, "a terrestrial guardian has chosen you for the task of securing the earth's future by destroying the evil ruler of Neburon." You wake up and realize that the dream is not as ephemeral as it seems: the guardian was really there, and has left a time machine on your front lawn.

Stepping inside, you use the control panel to select your destination. One dial controls the place (Antarctica, Africa, Asia, etc.) and another the time (400,000,000 BC, 50 BC, 1000 AD, 2082 AD, etc.). Any combination of locale and era is permitted, with the exception of trips to Neburon: you can't travel there in an age where interplanetary

flight does not yet exist.

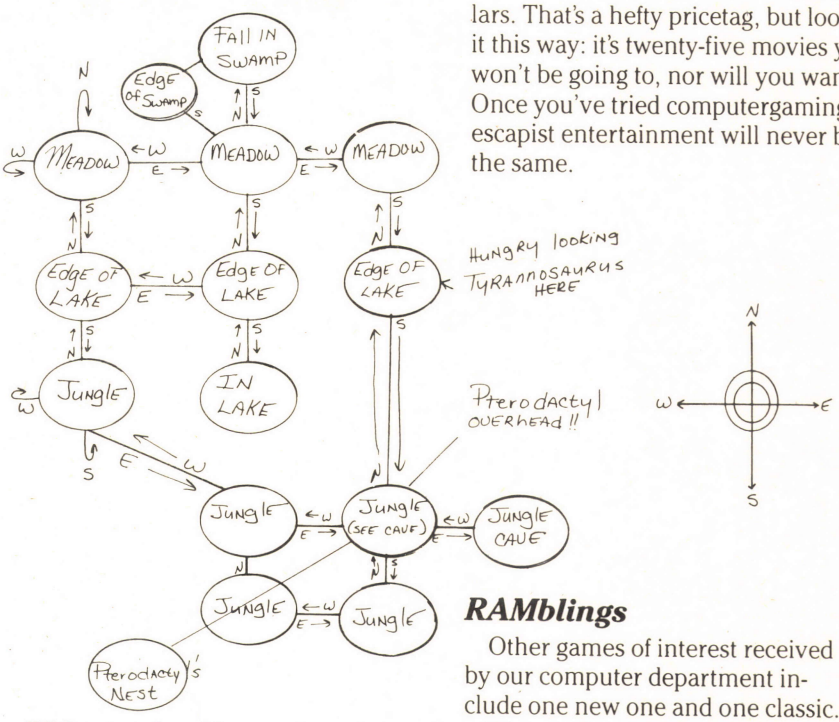
Hence, in whatever order you desire you must struggle through Ancient Rome (where you run the risk of becoming lost in the Seven Hills or being hacked "into several tiny pieces" in a pitch-black labyrinth beneath the Colosseum), battle prehistoric monsters (if you're fortunate enough not to stumble into a pit of quicksand), try to enlist the aid of a taciturn Ben Franklin in Revolutionary America, hold court with Robin Hood and his less-than-Merry Men, and risk the lethal chill of an Asian winter, just to name a few of the delights which await you.

As in *Ulysses and the Golden Fleece,* conversing with this game is relatively easy. You use the Apple keyboard to punch in two-word commands. For example, if you want to study the time machine controls more closely, you write LOOK DIAL, or if you want to press a certain archer for information you instruct the computer TALK ROBIN.

One advantage *Time Zone* has over its muscle-popping predecessor is its use of sound effects: the Apple-compatible program uses that computer's sound-synthesizer to give the time machine a proper acoustic ambiance.

The manufacturers have also provided the means for computergamers to write backup disks should anything happen to the originals, and the option to save the game at any given point, should the stress become too severe.

One way to keep nail-biting to a minimum during the course of your adventure is to map your progress through each locale and era. A sample chart suggested by Ms. Williams herself is reproduced below.



Without such guides, you're going to perish posthaste. Not only will you spend countless hours retracing your steps, but in the process you'll encounter foes whom you may have escaped the first time around but who are on to you now.

Never assume that the same trick'll work twice. A character who might have loved taking your bribe first time around, and parting with some scrap of information, may have a change of heart and slit your throat next time at bat.

Post hoc, ergo propter hoc, as Ulysses might say.

As for something our *editor* might say, as much as we applaud the efforts of On-Line, we're going to make a point of sending them a dictionary. The fierce meat-eating dinosaur is spelled "Tyrannosaurus," not "Tyrannasaurus," and the ruin they made of "Colosseum" must be seen to be believed, to cite just two.

Come *on,* people, use your heads! Apart from the fact that the spelling errors represent an horrendously sloppy and discouraging postscript to such a monumental work, it fuels the arguments of those who claim that video- and computergamers are illiterate sots.

Time Zone sells for one hundred dollars. That's a hefty pricetag, but look at it this way: it's twenty-five movies you won't be going to, nor will you want to. Once you've tried computergaming, escapist entertainment will never be the same.

RAMblings

Other games of interest received by our computer department include one new one and one classic.

The new game is *Space Games* from Educational Software of 5425 Jigger Dr., Soquel, CA, 95073. This one is a three-part battle with extraterrestrials who are trying to destroy your spacecraft.

In "Aliens," the first game, you must blast away 225 space beasts who attack in a *Space Invaders* — like scenario. Next comes "Survive," wherein the creatures who lived through the first onslaught come after you in a minefield. Your job is to lure them to the mines without stepping on them yourself. Finally there's "Robot Attack," in which you must enter the rooms of an alien spacecraft to retrieve the cloaking device your own ship's security requires.

Space Games is available in disk and tape versions for the Atari computer.

The old timer is a real gem with the unlikely name of *Crush, Crumble and Chomp!* Subtitled

Continued on page 59

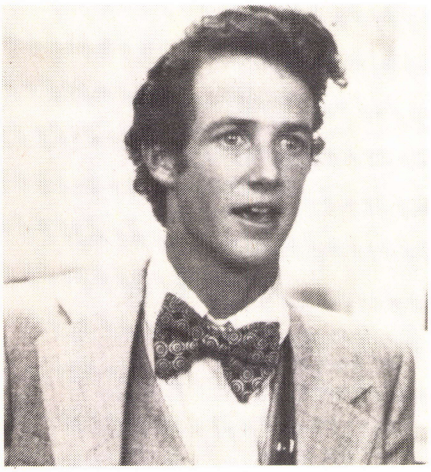
Meet the Original Dig Dug
Continued from page 52.
civilization of evil, must go underground and battle fire-breathing lizards galore, to name just one of their many foes.

And while there are no Fygars and Pookas in any of the Hobbit novels, there is a Frumgar and a Posco. The designers of *Dig-Dug* may well have had Tolkien's popular works in mind when creating their game.▲

The Mighty Thor inside the earth, declaiming as only a comic book character can. *© Marvel Comics Group*

star words

Marc McClure
Actor, Jimmy Olsen in the Superman films



"I like videogames. *Battlezone* is great, that one's my favorite. I'm hooked on it; lotta quarters. How can you *not* like it — unless your five dollars is gone. I always end up wishing that there was a button you could push just to get *two* of your quarters back. They should have that, if you've spent five dollars in one machine or scored a lot of points.

What I'd really love to see is a black curtain behind the arcade games, though, so you could really get into it.

I guess I should worry that it's taking money away from movies. They *are* competing with each other. But I like the games too much to complain."

Jeff East
***Star of* Superman *and* Deadly Blessing**

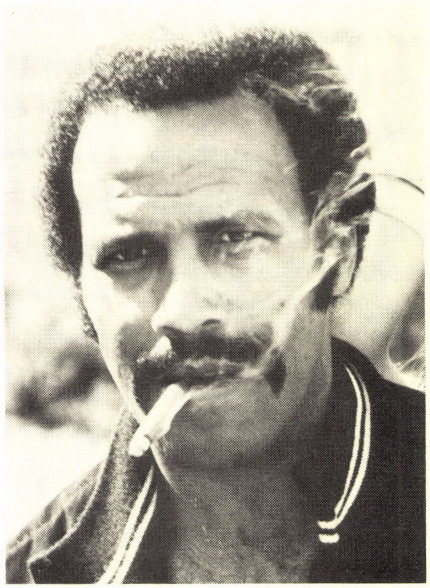
"I've played *Pac-Man* and *Donkey Kong,* and they're a trip. But I'm more of a pool player. For some reason, I tend to get a little too brainwashed playing videogames. You just stare and shut out everything else, go into a trance almost. And I don't like to do that. I like to be able to converse with people.

That's not to be taken as a value judgment on the medium: I think videogames are a very good thing. Certainly they're good for the economy.

I don't worry about them eating into movie revenues. There have always been pinball machines, and though those have never been as popular as videogames, I don't think the competition is one-to-one. In fact, if you look at how *Tron* the movie and *Tron* the videogame helped each other, I think the media complement rather than compete.

If anything is going to hurt the movie industry it's a lack of quality product."

Fred Williamson
Actor and ex-football player



"I think videogames are a great challenge. It's embarrassing sometimes when you walk up to a kid and watch him wipe out a game, then you try it and are defeated two seconds into the game.

But I think they're great mental stimuli for the kids. I'm an athlete but, no, it doesn't bother me that the machines don't move. I know they could give *me* plenty of exercise: when I'm finished, and I've lost, I just want to pick the game up and throw it."

championship videogaming

To the Editor:

Though you haven't reviewed my favorite arcade game, *Kick Man,* in your magazine, I'd like to point out a significant strategy.

I've watched other people playing, waiting my turn at the game, and notice one mistake being repeated over and over. While waiting for balloons to fall, players never stay *put.* They instinctively move toward the row which has the most balloons — which is a waste of time.

Don't move until the balloon falls!

A balloon is just as likely to drop from a column where it is the last remaining balloon, as from a row which has four balloons.

You can't get a jump on the balloon by changing your location. Besides, if you move, and the balloon falls from the same column as the one before it, you have given up an on-target position for nothing.

Recylcing paper is a great idea, but recycling your clown is a waste of time.

Marianne Baillie
New York, NY

To the Editor

I've played *Ulysses and the Golden Fleece* on my Apple, and while I'm as thrilled as you are with the graphics and the scope of the game, I think the programmers have been unfair in one or two spots.

It took me days, and an act of helpless desperation, to finally take the chance of pouring a skin of wine over my head to pass through Pluto's fire. I mean, when you've doused yourself with water and burned up, you're not keen on having another go at the wall of flame.

Also, after surviving Hades and sailing on, it's a pain to find that Neptune won't accept sacrifices like any clear-thinking god. I've tried giving him everything from a dead condor to gems to Hercules and nothing works.

My suggestion to would-be Ulysses: forget the obvious. Next time I see Neptune, I'm going to tell him that Pluto has invited him for tea. If he tells me he only drinks herbal, I'm going to fling the disk out the window.

Frank "Prometheus" Meyer
North Hollywood, CA

The thinking behind the wine gambit, we are told, is that the alcoholic content burns off first, leaving the hero unscathed.

To the Editor:

I would like to comment on a few items in your article "Conquering *Pitfall*" (December 1982 issue).

First, as the instruction book states, there are 255 scenes, not 256 (a minor point, but we might as well get it right!)

There are thirty-two treasures in all with four point values: Diamond Ring, 5,000; Gold Bar, 4,000; Silver Bar, 3,000; and Money Bag, 2,000.

You noted that playing backwards was cheating. Maybe in the purest sense, but it's not without hazards. When jumping the alligators right-to-left, it is necessary to take a step or two on the nose of the leftmost alligator in order to reach the bank.

When encountering a vanishing lake, tar pit, etc., if Harry is inched up to the edge while it is still visible, he can clear the entire obstacle with room to spare.

You also advise against jumping log trios at a run. If you jump the first log slightly sooner than normal, you can easily manage all three without breaking stride. This is especially helpful when you also have a vanishing obstacle to deal with.

Finally, you can descend underground without losing one hundred points. Pulling the joystick toward you just as Harry reaches the edge of the pit will cause him to climb down the ladder without falling. Try it standing still first. With a little practice, you'll be able to descend the ladder from a full run without stopping.

Going underground is a necessity if you wish to collect all thirty-two treasures. I've only managed to nab thirty before time ran out. With a little experimentation, you will learn which passages it is to your advantage to take.

Donald Budde
Memphis, TN

facetiae

The column which dares you to identify five popular home videogames based on the following verse.

I
Plummet if you have the nerve,
To score the points that's worth.
Outside forces make you swerve
From your goal on the earth.

II
In a world of treasures lost,
Where day is dark as night,
Gather riches — though the cost
May be a healthy bite.

III
Flat or wet or chewed-up
Are some words which do portray
The hero, if you've screwed-up
In the course of this foray.

IV
Got the bombs? You're ready
To begin this mission bold.
Keep horizons steady
Or you'll miss and will be *told.*

V
Shooting meteors is
Only one of this game's feasts.
When finished, hold your horses!
Here come earthbound Beasts.

Answers:
I: *Skydiver,* II: *Shark Attack,*
III: *Frogger* IV: *B-17 Bomber,*
V: *Cosmic Ark*

Cosmic Creeps

Continued from page 25.

ing a Kid: in levels four and beyond, when the first Kid and two Creeps are zipping along at great speeds, taking too much time to pick the aliens off can cost you the game. If you miss a creep with your first shot, make the whole line your target — just to be sure.

There is no way to score five thousand points simply by gunning for Creeps. Your priority *has* to be getting Kids to the Space Station, a minimum of three per round. (Actually, you'll be getting them to the upper right side of the screen, which is their real destination regardless of where the Space Station happens to be.)

More conservative players may wish to try the tack of never bombing two slow Creeps until the Kid has reached the Space Station. This way, you're assured they'll never catch the child and, therefore, you're guaranteed 1,500 points. However, steady games of roughly five thousand points each aren't nearly as thrilling as rounds of ten thousand points, which means tagging the creeps wherever possible!

If you're playing more aggressively, try to stay to the left side of the screen. This is where the Creeps will be emerging: after a while you'll begin to recognize the rhythm of their appearances and will be dropping bombs even before the invaders are on the screen, greeting their sudden emergence with instant death.

If you find yourself in need of points large or small as the game nears its conclusion, again, do not bother slow Creeps just to ensure your Kid's safe arrival. Conversely, if the earth is near setting and your Kid reaches the Space Station, don't bother sending up a new Kid. Shooting at the Creeps, you may bomb the Kid instead, squandering a perfectly good shot — and one hundred points.

One additional trick to help you master *Cosmic Creeps:* wherever your Kid happens to be on the screen, always keep the joystick pressed forward so that you will automatically release a new Kid when the other is safe. You can still shift the Space Station from side-to-side with the joystick in that position. The less functions you have to consciously perform, the less likely it is that the Creeps will get out of hand — or out of range, which they will surely do when the game reaches mach-speeds in some of the later levels.

Comment

Cosmic Creeps is one of the first releases from a new software company called Telesys. Their other recent cartridges are *Fast Food* and *Coco Nuts.*

Coco Nuts is something like *Kaboom!* in reverse, the object being to keep a safari member from suffering a hit on the head by coconuts, which are being hurled from the trees by a monkey. The palm seeds come more swiftly with each new round, and the game ends when the player has suffered subsequent blows on and thus lost her/his umbrella, pith helmet and head.

Fast Food is a *Kaboom!*-like game played horizontally, as all kinds of delectable treats from pizza to ice cream come hurling at a pair of chomping teeth. The player is supposed to gobble down as many calories as possible, obliged only to pass up the purple pickles; consuming too many of the latter will cause the game to end.

Telesys shows resource and invention in their games, particularly in *Cosmic Creeps.* They have managed to "adapt" *Frogger* gameplay to phase one of this program, forcing the player to negotiate the Skeeters and plasma en route to docking in a small niche on the opposite side of the screen. As for the "bopping" of the Creeps mode, this is akin to playing *Centipede* upside-down, beginning with the Kid-Creep line coiling across the screen and, upon hitting that, having to deal with the segments individually.

Nonetheless, the narrative of *Cosmic Creeps* makes for comparatively good videogame drama, allowing the two phases to knit into a whole which only the most worldly-wise videogamers will associate with either *Frogger* or *Centipede.*

The only objection some players will have to gameplay is that the sponge-like "boppers" behave as though they're balloons rather than missiles, floating down rather than diving at their targets. Their size, roughly equivalent to the Creeps, will also frustrate ultra-serious gamers who are accustomed to requiring greater accuracy to blast their targets — but only in the early rounds. While the size of the "boppers" makes stopping Creeps easy in the early waves, by the time the seventh or eighth game comes along, and the invaders are moving at what seem like light-speeds, even the "pros" will welcome the large projectiles!

In any case, these are minor complaints. Most players will find *Cosmic Creeps* an exciting, original challenge which *builds* rather than *vaults* into action. ▲

Star Wars

Continued from page 31.

Dave Prowse.

they let it become a be-all and control their lives.

VI: But aren't many body builders obsessed, and isn't that equally as anti-social?

DP: Oh, absolutely. Having no other interests will make you one of the biggest bores walking. I know, because it happened to me when I was first starting out. As soon as *any* interest becomes all-consuming, it's bad. But even as a body builder, I do not condemn videogames as many athletes do just because the games are passive. So is reading and photography, both of which I enjoy. There's room enough in one life for many pursuits.

VI: Speaking of *your* many pursuits, your appearances in TV shows and other films, have you been approached to do the fourth *Star Wars* picture?

DP: Well, it's episode one of the whole saga, and I don't even think Darth Vader figures in it. He'll figure in episodes two and three *(films five and six)* — but who knows. With the wonders they're working on special effects, but that time, he may be played by a computer. ▲

Computer Eyes

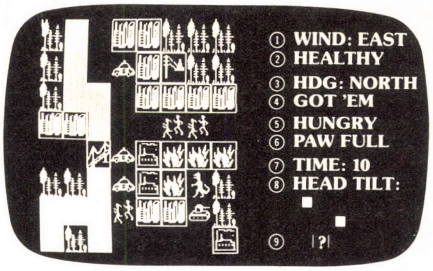
Continued from page 55.

"The Movie Monster Game," this Apple and TRS-80 compatible game requires you to play the part of a giant monster and destroy a city.

You are free to use one of the pre-designed monsters or build your own. The former grouping includes such luminaries as Goshilla, Kraken, Arachnis, the Glob, and others.

If you want to create your own, the first step is to select a carcass — biped, insect, amorphous blob, robot, etc. — after which you must choose "abilities," the monster's powers. Each time you pick a strength, you surrender a few "Crunch Credits"; once these are gone, you cannot make any further improvements on your beast.

Among the "abilities" you can "buy" are an ultrasonic scream, fiery breath, the capacity to shoot webs, fly, jump, etc.



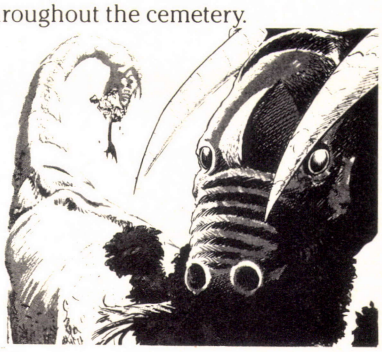
***A sample screen from* Crush, Crumble and Chomp!**

After the monster is assembled, it is placed on a map of the city of your choice (Tokyo, New York, San Francisco, Washington, D.C.) and you must raze it before you are too severely wounded or die of starvation.

This cathartic program is available from Epyx at POB 4247, Mountain View, CA 94040

Speaking of monsters, we'd like to recommend in closing one Apple-compatible game which is sure to appeal to the kids as well as to grownups.

The *Monster Mash* program from The Software Farm (3901 So. Elkhart St., Aurora, CO 80014) makes you caretaker of a graveyard from which the monsters are trying to escape. Your job in this maze-like game is to open and close gates which will lead the rambunctious beasts into one of your debilitating Monster Mashers, which are scattered throughout the cemetery.



There are different levels of play, but you *must* try the one with the eggs: when you mash an egg, a snake emerges to slither across the screen. It's the vilest video creature you'll ever see. ▲

input

Editor's note: some people sneak into Buckingham Palace to take tea with the Queen; others climb the towering World Trade Center from the outside. This second-time correspondent has her own peculiarities.

To the Editor:

Thank you for publishing my letter in the "Eye On" section of your December issue. I appreciated the opportunity to see Activision's new headquarters.

But I really think you printed it too small. After all, it's a big building: it deserved a big picture.

Judith Scott
Louisville, KY

Imagic's new headquarters are presently under construction. We promise to rectify our grievous mishandling of* l'affaire Activision *with a better handling of* that *building.

To the Editor:

Reading your interview with actor Cliff Robertson in the December issue, and looking at the photograph from the movie *Charly*, I'm reminded how important a maze was to that film. *(Editor's note: Charly Gordon's artificially boosted intelligence was tested by having him trace a route through a maze, on paper, quicker than a mouse could race it in fact)*

I couldn't help but wonder if the film were made today whether Charly would be racing *Pac-Man* through a videogame maze?

"Our" field could use some positive exposure like that!

Alan Allegra
Bethlehem, PA

Director-actor-writer Robertson is currently preparing* Charly II *for filming. He hadn't thought of using videogames in the new picture, but when we showed him your letter he admitted it was a good idea. We'll keep you posted.

To the Editor:

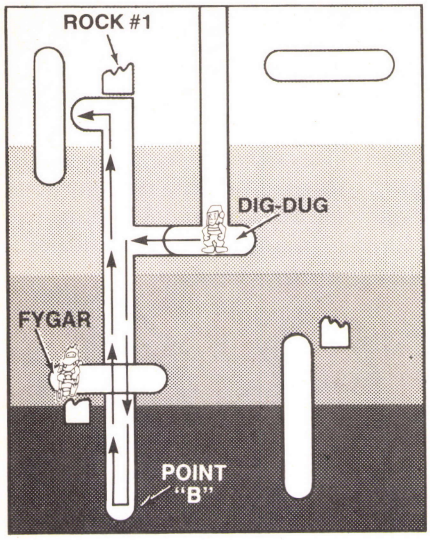
In your December "Keyboard," you defend the movie *Tron* on the basis of its innovative special effects.

Come on, people!

They were impressive enough, but Disney deserves the megabuck flop for having forgotten to give us a story that made sense. It was pure gibberish. I have no sympathy for filmmakers who treat movies like a giant tinker toy: all visual twists and turns and no body.

Gerry Marinelli
Anderson, IN

Our editorial complained about the two-dimensional characters in* Tron, *but you overstate the picture's flaws. The story was perfectly intelligible — if you were paying attention. We'll be happy to send you the complete run of* Tron *comic strips to help clear up your confusion.



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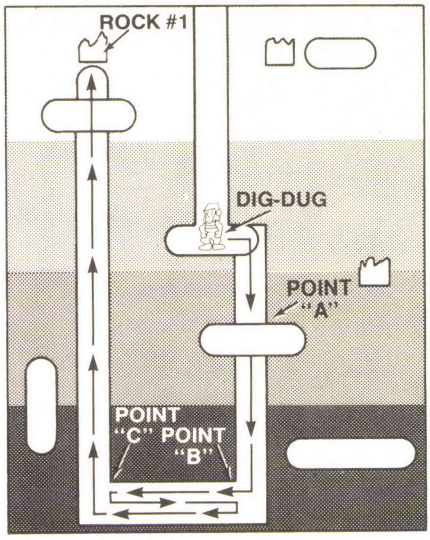

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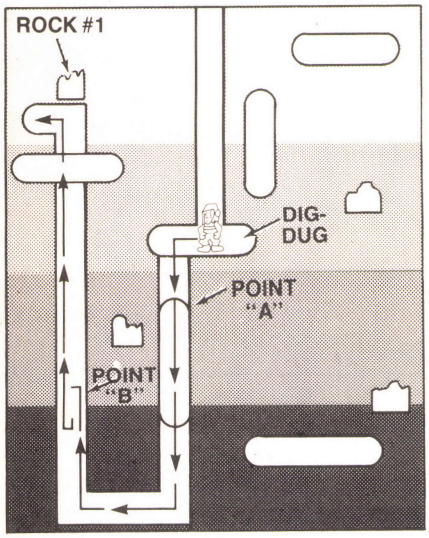

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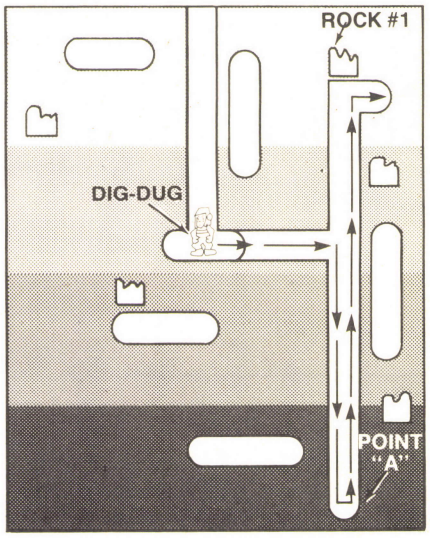
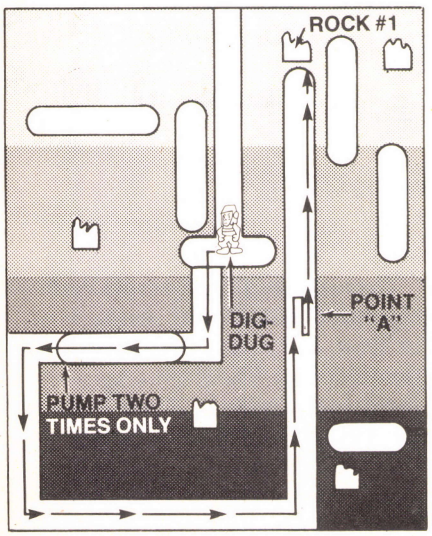
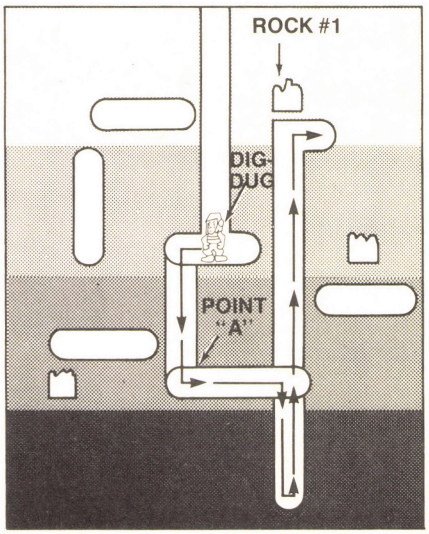


Round 4



Round 5



Round 6

Conquering Dig-Dug

Continued from page 50.

your patterns or the difficulty level of the game at that point.

Scoring

Keeping track of your score is important in *Dig-Dug* mainly because of the large variation of ways it is possible to clear off a round.

For instance, on round one it is possible to tunnel up under a rock and kill all the monsters in a single maneuver using just one rock. If this is done properly, a player can receive over 6,000 points on round one — which is obviously much better than simply blowing up the monsters individually and scoring only 2,000-odd points for this round.

In fact, it is possible to score 100,000 points on the first ten rounds if you develop patterns that involve crushing almost all the monsters under one rock. This strategy quickly builds up your stockpile of extra figures as well as adding points to your score.

The scoreboard on *Dig-Dug* is a very interesting part of the machine. It holds a total of five top scores, a record which is always on-display, along with the player's initials and the highest round reached.

The only flaw in the machine is that it does not register scores over 999,990 points. If you have attained a score of 999,990 on a machine you will remain in the number one spot on the scoreboard as long as you were the first one to reach this score or until the owner of the machine erases all the scores.

In playing a game of DIG-DUG you will notice that the first eleven rounds are totally different from each other. Because of this, it is necessary to make up individual patterns for each of these rounds.

The following patterns will help beginners take control of the game and will help advanced players score more points in their early rounds.

After the first eleven rounds are cleared, the game starts repeating a cycle of four different board configurations which makes it easier to successfully complete many boards without losing too many men.

Good luck!!!

When using this pattern on the first round, you will smash three to four monsters under rock #1. At the beginning of Round One, move your figure to

the left until it is in the path of rock #1. Proceed to move down to point A and then stop and inflate the Fygar. When the Fygar is fully inflated, run through it down to point B. At this point you must stop, turn around, and reinflate the Fygar without blowing it up.

A Pooka will be coming straight at you from above the inflated Fygar. It is necessary to quickly inflate the oncoming Pooka and run upwards through the monsters and toward point C. Upon reaching point C move to the left and drop the rock on the monsters.

On Round Two, move Dig-Dug one notch to the right and then down to point A. Here, you should inflate the Pooka and run through it to proceed to point C.

At this time, move back toward point B and inflate any monsters that come near you. Do not blow them up. Now it's time to proceed toward rock #1.

You may also have to inflate a monster in order to head straight up to rock #1.

You will find that this pattern will usually kill all the screen's monsters under one rock.

On round three, move Dig-Dug down to point A. There, you must inflate the monster and run through it while heading downward. When you reach the bottom of the board, turn left and head up to point B. There you must inflate another monster and proceed to rock #1. At this time, drop the rock on all the pursuing monsters.

A very important part of all these patterns involves the technique of stalling the monsters by inflating those that get in your way.

On round four, move your figure to the right, proceeding down when you are in line with rock #1. At point A you should inflate a Pooka and then start upward. Remember to stall for as long as possible before dropping the rock, which will allow you to kill all the monsters under one rock.

On round five, move your figure one notch to the left and proceed down into the Fygars' cage as shown in the diagram. When you run head-on toward the Fygar, pump it twice and run through the creature to proceed with the pattern.

At point A it will become necessary to back up slightly, then pump and run through a Fygar before reaching rock #1

It is common to kill all but one monster under this rock, which will leave enough time to drop a second rock and reach your bonus Vegetable.

On round six, move Dig-Dug one notch to the left and then turn down to point A. Here, you must stop and inflate the monster so you may pass through it. Turn to the right and go to the end of the monsters' cage where you must turn down to dig a trench to the bottom of the screen.

At this point turn around and ascend to rock #1.

Try to stall as much as possible on the way up to the rock. When you reach the rock, move to the right in order to keep all the monsters in the path of the falling rock.

Conclusion

It takes a little practice to develop the skill of effectively manipulating your little figure through the ground. One way to gain an understanding of the machine's joystick and pump button is to try and fight off two or three Pookas coming straight at you. If you practice stabbing back and then running forward, you will soon be able to fight several monsters at one time.

When you have developed good patterns and use the techniques described in this article, you will easily conquer even your own high scores on *Dig-Dug*. If not — hop on back to *Kangaroo*. ▲

golden pons

Test your videogaming knowledge

Welcome to a new feature in *Videogaming Illustrated,* one which will rate your knowledge of videogames — and then some.

For example, only the most superficial awareness of videogames is necessary to solve the first problem.

The answer to problem two requires *no* videogame literacy — only a disregard for punctuation.

So it will go, each issue. Puzzles to tax and entertain you.

If you lick all the problems, send your answers to us and we'll publish your name in the next issue's "Golden Pons" honor roll.

If you stumble over a problem or two, the solutions will appear in our next issue — of course.

See you there on February 22.

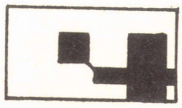
1. What is special about the *order* of these games?
   Adventure
   Tennis
   Air-Sea Battle
   Racquetball
   Ice Hockey

2. What is the hidden message in this selection of games?
   Indy 500, Starship, Surround, Space Fortress, Tennis, Alien Invaders-Plus, Star Raiders.

3. How many home videogames have cardinal numbers in their titles?

4. Can you drop one letter from *Turbo,* add "c" and "s" to the remaining letters, and rearrange them to spell the name of a videogame discussed in this issue?

5. Identify this Atari home videogame based on just a portion of the screen.



HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Centipede

Among the first releases for the Atari 5200, this is one of the few home videogames which is sure to satisfy fans of its arcade counterpart.

Though a trakball attachment will be available early in 1983, the joystick for the 5200 is a smooth-handling, very responsive tool which does not detract in the least from gameplay.

Everything is here: the distinctive sound effects, the bobbing and slithering cast of characters, the proliferation of mushrooms, increasingly more rapid screens, and the nimble, segmented star itself.

For *Centipede* buffs, this cartridge is worth the purchase of the new 5200 unit. And, having bought it, you'll find *this* console's edition of *Defender* a vast improvement over the pared-down version created for Atari's 2600 video computer system.

Towering Inferno

This is a US Games, Atari-compatible maze game which doesn't seem like a maze game, as players go from room to room putting out fires.

The view is from overhead, looking down as the the fires slither along horizontally through each room. This movement, the juxtaposition of one wall of flame against another, creates the sizzling mazes through which the fireperson must move with a hose, dousing fires (ie, eliminating segments of the maze walls).

Much more exciting than the Imagic game *Fire Fighter.* Though the latter is a more ambitious game — you must alternate between hosing the fire, extending a ladder, and rescuing a trapped apartment dweller — it's not so much fun as an exercise in stubborn, methodical perseverence.

Towering Inferno, on the other hand, is fast-paced entertainment.

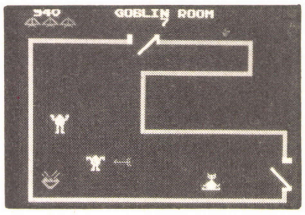
Venture

To date, ColecoVision has done no wrong.

This is a spectacular adaptation of the arcade game, as players race from room to room trying to recover various treasures.

Each chamber contains a different menace — serpents, crushing walls, cyclops, etc. — which the player must evade or destroy before recovering the goods.

The entire game has actually been *scored,* each room boasting its own frenetic soundtrack. The music, straight from the silent film era, adds enormously to the spirited nature of the game.



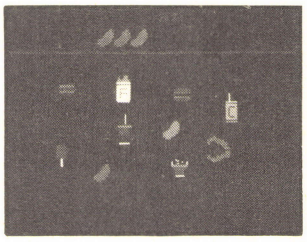
The graphics are more functional than dressy, but there are so *many* different visuals that the player will not become bored.

Remarkably, Coleco has scored with all three versions. Though the Atari-compatible edition lacks the music, and the Intellivision edition is also less sophisticated, play value in all is superb.

RECOMMENDED

Fast Food

Telesys has been getting some gag-mileage out of this Atari-compatible cartridge, as people pick it up to see just what kind of a crazy videogame can possible be based on our penchant for junk food.



The answer is a *good* game. The player controls a pair of teeth on the right-hand side of the screen, while from the left come all manner of edibles: ice cream, pizza, cake, soda, et al.

There are also two kinds of pickles, purple and green. The green ones are okay to consume, but if your chompers take in a purple one — that's the first step toward belly-ache city.

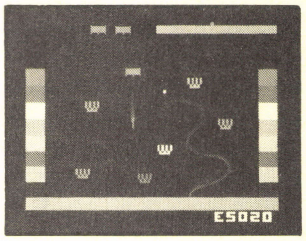
The more calories you consume, the higher your score. Eat too many purple pickles, and the game ends.

The food comes more furiously with each successive wave.

Fast Food is like *Ka-boom!* played on its side. The graphics are unappetizing and the characterization lean, but when the food starts flying you'll be too busy eating to bellyache about details.

Threshold

This is one of the best space games on the market due, in large part, to the



swift and merciless gameplay.

As in *Demon Attack* and *Phoenix,* you're flitting about trying to gun down zig-zagging invaders. But manufacturer Tigervision has thrown in some smashing patterns and not-very-cooperative targets to make this cartridge distinctive and enjoyable in its own right.

NOT RECOMMENDED

Gorf

CBS undertook an ambitious cartridge here, loading the various and complicated arcade-generated space attack patterns into a home game.

They got 'em all in, but sacrificed graphics and gameplay to do so.

The first level, "Astro Battles", is the best, the fast-paced *Space Invaders* variation but "Laser Attack", with flying aliens diving or firing death beams at the player's ground-based ship, is much too sparse.

The "Space Warp" level is the worst, enemy ships spinning from a space web in simple, dull, predictable patterns. "Flag Ship" is a gross simplification of the arcade version, your target being the internal power reactor of a tiny Gorfian "parent ship."

Sound effects are merely serviceable.

Save your money for CBS's *Wizard of Wor. That* one's a pip.

"DEFENDER"
Continued from page 14

ing witnesses to my certain humiliation at the hands of the machine.

My idea of getting my money's worth is not to have a glass, plastic and wooden thing hurl incomprehensible images into my eyes while my limbs spasmodically jerk on misunderstood controls until the words "game over" put me out of my harried misery. Then, the thought of turning the machine over to pubescent pros who make their twenty-five cents last three-quarters of an hour was too much for my ego to bear. I would protect Audrey's flank.

My attention returned to my daughter, who was handling the control stick with the sweaty finesse of a fighter pilot with a hundred enemy planes to her credit. I realize it's not exactly flattering to think of one's own daughter in those terms, but ever since the divorce, I only got to see her one day a week. And if she were becoming a stranger to me before our split, she was becoming increasingly alien every passing week.

I checked my watch, the one with the broken crystal and upside down nine my grandfather had given me. Because there was a six in the nine o'clock position, he let me have it free.

"Aud, honey, it's close to six thirty."

She didn't answer me. Instead, her shoulders hunched and she pulled the control stick to the left, trying to steer the machine like a Grand Prix driver negotiating a particularly vicious Le Mans turn.

"You said you wanted to see *Laverne and Shirley*."

"In a minute," she grunted.

It was all right with me. I shrugged for my own benefit and sighed for hers. You know, one of those theatrical, audible paternal sighs that displayed displeasure as well as said, "don't say I didn't warn you." I wasn't the one who wanted to see the strident sitcom. What I wanted ... nuts, it never seemed to matter what I wanted. I didn't even want to name her Audrey. In fact, I was dead set against it. Audrey was the name of someone who had bright, stringy red hair and did horrible things to cats by their tails.

That was probably the last staw. Having a major argument over your only child's name in the hospital was not the sign of a strong marital relationship. But Leah wouldn't budge. She felt that she had done all the work and she wanted the child of her own loins to have the name Audrey. I couldn't argue with her reasoning but I put the name Audrey in the same basket with "Bertha," "Agnes," and "Millicent." Only certain people had names like that and we all knew how they looked.

If I had my choice, I would have picked Benny Hill. Not as a name, but as something to watch at six-thirty. But neither Leah nor Audrey liked the bawdy English humor. Leah called him chauvinistic. Audrey said he was a "fag." I looked down at her active little body at the controls of the videogame as her right hand wrenched the control stick to the right and her left hand slapped at the board's buttons.

No, she wasn't a little redhead who tortured kittens. She had her mother's dark, loosely curled hair and her mother's dark olive coloring. About the only thing she got from me, poor thing, was her slightly hooked nose and high cheek bones. She certainly didn't get her tenacity at playing videogames from me.

If I were anything, it would have to be a pinball man. And not just any pinball man, either. Like a first love, I remembered the ancient metal monstrosity in the back room of my grandmother's corner store. Both sets of grandparents resided in Baltimore, Maryland. My mother's parents ran a jewelry store on Pennsylvania Avenue. My father's folks had a corner candy store crammed with everything anyone could imagine, up to and including a pinball machine in the back room.

I remember that thing as clearly as my date on prom night. She was a petite blond named Kay Arnold. It was a sparkling, beautifully designed machine called *Manhattan*. It had a colorful backglass filled with painted numbers on a surface which looked like celluloid. There were no flippers and no rolling numbered scores. After I'd catapult the silver ball into the game field, each target and bumper would light up a different square on the back glass, illuminating the painted numbers until the ball would drain at the bottom.

Then the final score would be tallied on the backglass with a flurry of lights and clanging sounds. Two squares would finally light up and stay lit, like the "10,000" and "200" squares, meaning the score was 10,200. But I couldn't count then and I didn't care. I had to stand on an orange crate just to play the thing anyway. I wasn't interested in the highest score. I just loved watching that ball move — making those lights flash and bells ring.

Remembering something like that made me feel warm inside though why was beyond me. But it *did* help me understand what was going on inside Audrey's head. Why she would want to encroach on this turf at this time of night just to pump quarters into a frustrating game machine. It was all made clearer by the memory of that gaunt, ruddy-faced kid in the back room of the messy store, mindlessly propelling an orb across a playfield again and again and again.

But there weren't any pinball machines here, with flippers or without. There was only a black and red machine named *Hyperball* and all that had were two pistol grips complete with triggers. And it shot out silver orbs with the sound of an android being given the Heimlich Maneuver.

As I finished up my reverie, I saw Audrey's shoulders slump and the muscles across her neck and arms loosen. She unglued herself from the sundry controls like a cat relaxing after the neighbor's dog trotted by. As she turned toward me, her face lost its intense animation; replaced by a blank expression I had to assume was shared only by her peers and the cryogenically frozen.

"Did you have a good game?" I asked.

"It was okay," she answered, looking vaguely around for another challenge to conquer.

"What was it like?" I wasn't trying to draw her out. I really wanted to know. All I saw was the blue whozis, the red

whatsis and the unusually dull cabinet labeled *Gravitar.*

"It was okay."

I blinked and my eyes rolled quickly to the left, seemingly beyond my control. I was awash in a sea of indifference without a paddle. I was up the creek of sullen animosity without a clue as to why. It was just that over the last few weeks, Audrey's usual festive mood whenever I appeared had been replaced by a clammy coolness I'd been unable to thaw. And when all the bantering, cajoling and friendly silences were spent, I responded to her growing apathy by doing whatever she monosyllabically requested. I spent a half hour dragging out of her what she might deign to do and then slavishly acceded to any and all of her desires.

That was the only way she got me into this den of iniquity in the first place. I had only been inside once before and that was just to pick up two frankfurters with mustard and bacon to go when I had been in a junk food mood going home after dropping Audrey off some Sundays ago. That was enough for me. Then and now, the place was — in the words of Howard Cosell — a cacaphony. A cacophony of sourly alluring smells and sound.

The memory was more vivid than being here now. Then, aroma of chicken, pork, beef, onions, and potatoes frying in beer was matched by the strange sound of all the video games being played at once. Flailing upon my protected ears, it sounded like a robot orchestra tuning up for battle. At the time I was nearly hurled backwards from the place by the sheer strangeness of it all.

But I exaggerate. Actually I walked into the place that night without missing a step, stood in the chow line, and looked at the "Amusement Parlor" room with vague distrust. But I look at any crowded, smokey, noisy room filled with less-than-desirable people the same way. I ordered, paid for and received my two hot dogs before turning heel on the whole building, vowing never to return. That was before my daugher turned her zombie-like charm on me.

"Six twenty-three," I reminded her. *"Laverne and Shirley."*

She had almost completely turned from me, seemingly looking for some way out of the conversation. Then, in a tone from which I translated volumes, she replied. "It'll be on again."

The two volumes I heard were titled, "Don't Bug Me" and "You Should've Been Smart Enough to Know That." Sufficiently chastised, I started considering my options. I could turn off the quarter supply and risk a total breakdown in the deteriorating relationship. I could stop caring, but that was about as realistic as stopping the blood flow after falling into a farm thresher.

I could wup her aside the head, but then I would have her mother — my ex-wife — to answer to. Take it from me; it must be a lot less complicated to beat your wife and children when you're married. There's less risk of lawsuits. If only I had the foresight to slug them silly when I had the chance instead of being the agreeable, well-intentioned, compromising fellow I am.

Thankfully I didn't have to make any rash decisions on how to overreact. The fight took care of that.

I didn't see how it started. Maybe Audrey saw, but she wasn't talking. All I knew was that one second I was considering giving my own daughter a sneak rabbit punch behind the ear, and the next second, some young people were brutally scrambling over a row of video machines.

Lest anyone still be under the mistaken impression that real life fights are in any way, shape or form similar to those seen in James Bond movies or Batman TV shows, let me tell you clearly and plainly that violence in reality is a clawing, screeching, chaotic, frightening thing.

The adjustment necessary to accept that it's actually happening is nasty enough. There's a feeling one gets when this sort of ugliness explodes. The body goes numb and then tingles. Much in the same way, I would imagine, you feel when standing directly in front of a tornado.

It's fear, stark and paralyzing. It is panic, undiluted and nauseating. Way beneath it all, it is the knowledge of mortality — knowing that you could die in the next few seconds no matter who you are and what you stand for.

All of a sudden, I was totally stripped of all artifice and I kicked over to automatic. My first instinct was to protect my cub. With a speed and strength I would later feel dumbly proud of, I danced forward, jamming my hands between Audrey's arms and body. I pulled her back and swung around, lifting her up and away from the sudden maelstrom of punching and kicking activity.

I deposited her down in the doorway of the restaurant section, only to find it blocked with the bodies of what could be lightly termed "innocent bystanders." Some people instinctively run from trouble. Others are instinctive audiences; they have to watch ... with sick fascination. All thought of aiding is out of their minds — they become mute, catatonic witnesses, eager to vicariously lap up pain.

These coherent thoughts would come later. At the moment, the onlookers were obstructions to the safety of my child. Although they were blocking our escape, they had yet to close ranks. I saw my opening and I let Audrey take it. There was space between two neighboring thighs. With a swinging shove, I propelled Audrey through.

The flesh and bone seemed to clamp closed on my wrist like two swinging doors. I wrenched my hand out, the flesh along the palm being scratched by a metal button on a denim jacket. I stumbled back, hearing the scuffle mingling with the electronic jeers.

My heel hit something yielding. It twisted and snaked from under my shoe like some frenzied house pet. But no house pet I ever owned then hit me in the middle of the back. I pulled myself away with the surprising speed of that same house pet, feeling shock splash over my body like a Malibu wave. I fell hard against the *Hyperball* machine, pulling my torso to the side and not quite sitting on the floor with my legs stretched out.

I held myself almost upright by grabbing onto the sides of the pinball machine-shaped cabinet. I was low enough and far away from the main battle to finally get an idea what was happening.

Two boys no older than eighteen were going at it like seasoned streetfighters. One was bringing the bottom of his fist down repeatedly on the back of another's head, neck, and shoulders while the other had both fists firmly gripped in the other's jacket — trying to get a clear kick between the hitter's legs.

That pounding attack mutated into another as the first boy abruptly brought up his knee into the other's bowed head. The hands buried in his lapels abruptly opened and then spasmodically tightened again as the second fighter tried to climb up his opponent. Their fingers quickly pushed forward again, as if both had been loaded into fleshy cannons. As they scratched at each other, the combatants fell into a *Ms. Pac-Man* machine.

The videogame howled in electronic horror before the sound of cracking wood and breaking glass drowned out its digitized wail. All the other players made room for the fighters as all three — men and machine — went down. The machine, more than anything else, caused the most damage. As I gingerly got to my feet, the *Ms. Pac-Man* slammed into two other machines behind it, pushing them both forward, nearly tipping over the one to its left.

The two boys fell off the machine and into the crevasse between it and the next standing videogame. The lapel grabber had rolled onto the bottom. The puncher was on top and he made the most of the situation. His right fist rose and fell like a trip hammer, trying to get through the other's two sets of upraised fingers.

Initially I had been worried that the fight would spread throughout the arcade in time-honored "barroom brawl" fashion. I obviously hadn't kept up on my "modern apathy" studies because as I watched, the rest of the players spread out in a roughly Coliseum-like circle. It was the Spinks-Ali fight all over again. They hammered each other and the audience ate it up.

I had it all worked out in my mind. I would stride forward, the expression on my face a mix of determination, concern, as well as a certain world-weariness. I saw myself marching through the crowd, the onlookers making way for me with looks of admiration and relief. Some would look apprehensive, but respond to my conviction and assurance.

I saw my big hand, with its long fingers, reach down and wrap around the puncher's collar. With one tug, I'd pulled him off the other kid. I'd throw him back into the onlookers as one of his flailing arms grazed my head, pushing a hank of black hair across my brow. They'd responded by holding the frenzied kid back.

I'd turn my attention to the lapel grabber as he tried to rush up and onto his opponent. Jettisoning all subtlety, I would only have time to plant my foot firmly in the middle of his chest and push down. He'd slam heavily against the floor, knocking all the wind out of him.

"Don't," was all I would say. The tone of my voice and the weight of my sinewy leg would be enough to convience him to remain still . . .

It seemed simple enough and I swear I was prepared to do it. I felt adrenaline powering my limbs in preparation. It might have worked just that way if I had moved when I first got the inspiration. But something held me back. It was probably the fleeting image of the crowd *not* holding onto the kid and him coming back with a knife that kept me in check.

Whatever it was, I never got a chance to test my heroism. Before I could formulate a contingent fantasy, the human door was hurled open by the manager and several kitchen helpers. By the looks of it, they were used to this kind of thing. They plowed right into the crowd, their little paper mesh hats holding onto their grease-sweated heads for dear life.

Seemingly without concern for secreted knives, pistols, grenades or bazookas, the overweight but burly manager wrenched the puncher off the screaming lapel grabber and hurled him into the welcoming arms of his fellows, who twisted the kid's arms up his back. The fighter bucked and kicked until the pain of his trapped limbs reached his brain.

The manager wasn't much for style. He planted his knee on the lapel grabber's neck like Al Jolson fishing for an encore.

"Don't move or I'll rip your head off," he roared in no uncertain terms. Everyone, including the lapel grabber, was impressed.

The uninterrupted sound of cheery, electronic video warfare returned to the fast food joint, unaltered by any human aggression.

"The show's over," another employee said, probably reveling in the cliche. "Go back to what you were doing."

The crowd spread out, returning to their meals and their games just as if the movie had ended and they were all heading home. There seemed to be no sense of import to the incident at all. Only distantly did I head the excited chatter of a few younger kids extolling the neat and keen virtues of the fight.

I snapped from my fantasy as the employees pushed the two fighters out of the arcade and behind the food counter. Around the edge of the doorway, I could see them pushing the duo through a swinging door into the back of the kitchen. My focus was altered when Audrey appeared on the other side of the doorway, looking at me with what I read as expectant disappointment.

I had done it again. This sort of thing had haunted me all my life. I looked down at my hands. Not the long, strong ones I had pictured in my mind, but the rather ordinary, plain things they actually were. They were not the hands of anyone special; they were the hands of a person who didn't have it too bad and didn't have it too good. In other words, they were the hands of an all-too-ordinary person. Me. Milton Tobias Sloan,

Audrey didn't want to see me. She seemed to want to see what I saw in my mind. Milton Tobias Sloan, Private Eye. That, after all, was what I was. That was what it said on my license in my wallet, at any rate. Actually, that isn't what it says on the card. The card was made up by the same bureaucrats who call janitors "custodial engineers" and sneak-

ers "running shoes," but that's what it means.

It says, and I am, Milton Tobias Sloan, Private Investigator. Private Dick. Gumshoe. Shamus. And all those other nifty nicknames. But when the going got tough and it was my turn to strut my stuff, my own, more personal nickname, came into play.

As far back as I can remember — as the saying goes, which, in this case, is literally true — my mind would shift off into daydreams. During school, during Church, during dinner, whenever, my brain would latch onto a thought and not let go, no matter where this mental balloon would drift. I would just hold onto the string for dear life until the dream reached its natural conclusion or the bubble burst, dropping me back to earth.

And I would "awaken," my eyes looking through people or things and my mouth agape. My expression would give "vacuous" a new meaning. My parents were always afraid I was a bit slow. There had been some mental illness in the family so they were always on the watch for any sign of stolidness. I kept them on their toes.

My schoolmates, however, took it all in stride. With the eager cruelty of children everywhere, they bent the name to fit the personality. I wasn't a "Milty" or a "Toby," so the Milton Tobias became "M.T." and "M.T." became "Empty."

It stuck. From then on, the name was used with both affection and insult by both friend and foe. At first, Leah found it endearing. That was before we were married. Afterwards our cups didn't runneth over. Going blank on occasion in everyday life can be handled. Going blank constantly with someone you live with was bound to get infuriating.

Like mother, like daughter. Audrey's disappointment was clearly etched on her face, as if the word had been tattooed across her forehead. It was my job to stop trouble. So why was I leaning against a *Hyperball* machine staring at my hands?

There was no "thanks for getting me out of the line of fire, pop." Just a bland look of "so now what do we do for fun?" Maybe I was imagining all that too. Maybe she saw that I was all right so felt no need to ask. Ten year olds were like that, I guess. It would help if she said something. It would help if I said something. Anything.

Once again the threat of conversation was alleviated by the establishment's hired help. Our attention was diverted as they picked their way through the already messy floor and grabbed the sides of the fallen *Ms. Pac-Man* machine. We watched as they pulled it back to it's original position — the rest of the players concentrating on the working games.

One kid taped an "out of order" sign across its shattered screen as I noticed the mirror just inside the broken glass. I was surprised, for some reason. I had always thought that what I was seeing was the actual screen, not a reflection of it. For some reason, that fascinated me. It had less than a hypnotic effect on Audrey.

"Come on, Dad," she said. "I'm ready to go." She turned and started walking toward the restaurant door.

I all but ignored her. I was vaguely aware of her diminishing presence, but the employees' work had me riveted. I felt my heart beginning to make the long crawl up my throat. Something was trying to tell me something.

Audrey kept moving to the north. I went south, following one employee to the row of machines just behind the fallen Pac-Person game. The two rows stood back to back and I watched as the kid approached the pair of machines pushed out of place by the fight. People had the sense not to play them.

"Dad," Audrey wailed with impatience from the door. I just barely heard her whining tone as I stood my ground at the head of the row. The kid pushed the left machine back into place. It screeched annoyingly across the tile floor.

"Dad," Audrey complained. "I'm missing my show." As if she owned *Laverne and Shirley*.

But I was beyond that. I was watching my own show now. The Adventures of Empty Sloan, Pennsylvania Private Eye. The narrator was winding up for a crackerjack teaser just before the first commercial. It may sound dramatic now, but even in retrospect, I could feel it. My subconscious had picked something up before. I had seen something during the fight that was now hacking its way through my tapioca-filled head to daylight.

The employee pushed back the other machine. It slid across the floor with surprising ease for about a foot. The kid was taken aback by the difference, his eyebrows rising. My eyebrows joined him. My eyes went in the opposite direction.

Below the right corner of the cabinet, the tile was streaked. There was a line of dark liquid tracing the direction the machine was pushed in. From this distance, it looked like brown oil. My legs were already propelling me forward without the need of a daydream. Instead, in my mind's eye I saw the *Ms. Pac-Man* fall against the two machines.

One hadn't reacted the same was as the other. One balked against moving forward, almost cracking. One seemed far more bottom-heavy. My vision cleared, seeing my feet on either side of the streaked stain.

I hadn't seen a lot of it, but I had seen enough. I knelt down, pushing my hand between the two machines.

"What the hell are you doing, man?" the employee asked with irritation.

I felt the bottom side of the cabinet. It was damp and sticky. My fingers came into the fluorescent light of the arcade stained crimson.

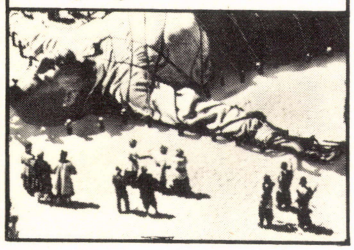
I looked up to see the employee staring wide-eyed and closed mouthed at my hand. "Call the police," I said quietly. "This machine is bleeding."

The employee moved away quickly as Audrey approached. I heard her suck in her breath as I stood in front of the machine. It's name was emblazoned across the top of the cabinet: *"HOMICIDAR."*

I looked down through the dark, cracked screen beneath those letters. Another face looked back. It wasn't mine.▲

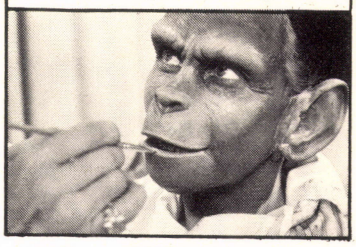
NEXT ISSUE: Part Two "RIP OFF"

Do little things get you down?



Do they have to drag you from bed each day?

Does life make a monkey out of you?



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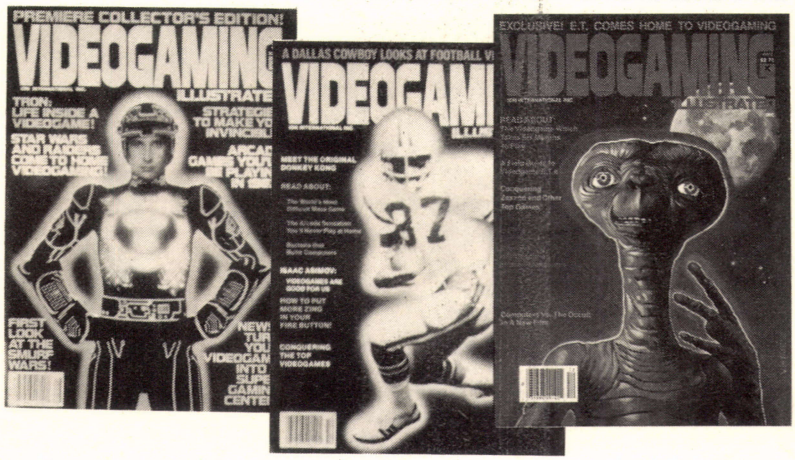

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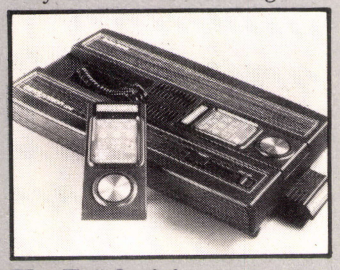
eye on

Continued from page 10

NOT US

Lining up behind those who aren't afraid of a break in the videogame boom is Radio Shack.

In addition to the computers manufactured by the company, there is now "Tandyvision." The unit takes only Intellivision cartridges.



The Tandyvision console, which accepts all cartridges made for Intellivision.

The relationship between the Tandy Corporation, Radio Shack's parent group, and Mattel, which manufactures Intellivision, is similar to that which exists with Atari and Sears. In essence, Tandy slaps its imprimatur on consoles produced by Mattel.

Like Intellivision, Tandyvision retails for $249.

Tandy is also stocking fifteen of Intellivision's most popular cartridges. In addition, they've added a new wrinkle to the ease with which you can buy your games: the Intellivision Cartridge Hotline. Just call your local Radio Shack for details.

ONE STEP BETTER

As convenient as the Intellivision Cartridge Hotline may be, it has nothing on the Halfway House, which bills itself as "A refuge for software addicts." It also bills *you,* for games which you buy through the mail.

The special claim to fame of the Halfway House is that it boasts a "first look collection" for potential buyers. "We let our members take a close look at the software without any obligation to buy it," says founder Sid Webb.

At the present time, the mail order firm only stocks software for Apple computers. However, they are planning to increase their inventory if the noble experiment is successful.

The Halfway House is located at POB 22305, Lexington, KY, 40502.

FOR REAL ADDICTS

Not only can you sample games through the mails, but if you live in London you can try them on your way to work as well: the state-owned railroad is installing videogames in its cars.

The ploy is being tested on the London-Sheffield run in the hope of luring people to the rails as a way of travel. Despite the price of petrol, Londoners prefer to motor into town.

The placement of *Space Invaders* on the train has been successful, and plans are underway to get more games into that and other routes.

A spokesperson for British Rail has tagged this a "commercial rather than a technical experiment," adding that he is enormously pleased with its success.

THAT'S WHERE

Just in case you were asking yourself, "Where will videogames appear next," we've got the answer: casinos.

Last year, the Sands Casino in Atlantic City offered gamblers video units equipped to play slot, poker, and blackjack. Instead of the traditional images of cards, dice, and lemons, there were computer-generated pictures.

The Sands had no idea how gamblers would react to this unorthodox mode of play. The answer, however, was a hearty affirmative. Indeed, reaction to those electronic games equipped with computer-generated voices was particularly favorable. According to some players, the machines are friendlier than their human counterparts.

Today, two hundred of the casino's over one thousand machines are videogames, and they're spreading into other casinos. In Las Vegas, the Dunes now has four hundred units. Over ten percent of the 100,000-plus gambling machines in the nation are now videogame units.

Indicative of the popularity of the videogame mode is the fact that nearly eighty percent of the units sold by Bally, one of the world's largest slot machine manufacturers, is video. Three years ago, they were selling none.

Nor is the video explosion ending there. Rooms are now offering TVs displaying video roulette tables, allowing players to take a chance while they lounge around, while videodiscs of horse races offer players the chance to bet on races and see the outcomes.

Everyone seems pleased — except the mechanics who repair the slot machines. Their video counterparts require fifteen percent less maintenance.

EX-JUNGLE KING

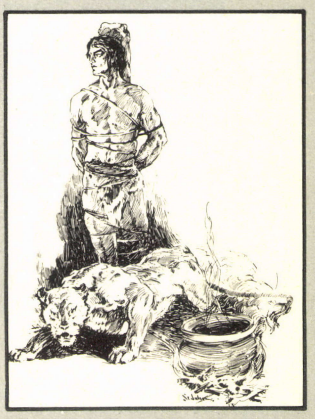
Almost everywhere you turn, videogames are being blamed for the decline in American reading habits.

Money, it is said, is going to machines instead of to books; kids' attention is on *Dig Dug* and not *Journey to the Center of the Earth.*

Well, score one for the authors!

Jungle King has been one of the most successful recent releases from Taito, placing second only to *Donkey Kong Jr.* in a recent popularity poll.

However, the vine-swinging videogame hero was not-so-popular with attorneys for Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. The Tarzana, CA based company controls the characters



Tarzan in a bind in this 1916 illustration by J. Allen St. John.

which appear in the nearly one hundred novels penned by the late author — including the twenty-five tomes about the adventures of Tarzan of the Apes.

The Burroughs people felt that the Taito game in-

fringed upon their Tarzan copyright, so the two companies went to court.

"It's over," said a Burroughs lawyer after the brief bout in Federal Court. "There was a consent judgement and all we can say is that the game is being replaced."

Unfortunately for Taito, they were not able to simply license Tarzan because, as the Burroughs attorney notes, "ERB Inc. is already involved" in such negotiations with another firm.

What this means is that *Jungle King* games already sold to arcades will be allowed to stay, but before any new games can be shipped they must be totally redesigned. The first of the reworked editions, with new gameplay and cabinets both — not to mention the new title *Jungle Hunt* — is now making its first ape-pearance.

An impressive victory, this seventy year-old hero climbing from the crumbling, yellowed pages of antiquity to vanquish a microprocessed usurper!

CLEAN VIDEO-GAME ACT

What does your videogame collection have in common with a court battle? Simple: they can both be messy. The difference, of course, is that it is much less costly to clean up your cartridge disarray.

This is particularly true now that Imagic has introduced a complete videogame storage center which organizes game consoles, paddles and joysticks, instruction manuals and overlays, as well as cartridges. You can pack fifteen

Out of chaos comes order, thanks to Imagic.

Atari-compatible or eighteen Intellivision cartridges in this handy little container. The unit, complete with a smoked-plastic lid, sells for $29.95.

LAY OFF!

These days, one can't even open the newspaper without being assaulted with the idiotic theory that videogames are causing the decline of Western Civilization.

One wonders how Rome ever fell without them.

In any case, know your enemy: in a recent edition of the Sunday newspaper supplement *Family Weekly*, an article headlined *Pac-man/Slack Kids* implied that videogames are causing a dearth of physically fit individuals.

"In these days of videogame madness," the article began, "kids' eyes and wrists are getting a good workout, but very little else is."

We agree! Give up videogames. Oh, and — better stop reading, too. All that sitting is bad for your heart. And knock off the eating, because only your mouth gets a good workout. And make *sure* you stay away from that all-time champion of decadence where *nothing* gets a workout — sleep.

Where's Clarence Darrow when you need him?

TAKE THAT!

Another, less frantic charge against videogames came from a sister publication, one which covers the toy industry.

In reporting on summer sales, *Playthings* magazine noted, "Are videogames in arcades taking away from certain categories in toy and hobby retailing? Some Twin Cities retailers think so."

The article went on to quote one retailer as complaining, "A lot of quarters are going into arcades — that's the only explanation I have for the drop in all kinds of games and in, for instance, metal trucks."

Quite a theory, there. And we thought *everyone* stored their games in Tonka dumptrucks.

SHORT NOTICES

We'll take a brief pause in our globe-girdling coverage to bring you up-to-date on the doings of two old friends.

When last seen in our pages, Odyssey was busy planning the sophisticated Odyssey 3 unit, readying a Sherlock Holmes-like game for the Master Strategy series, and selling out of its new Voice module.

Now the company is set to release two new cartridges, first announced in our October issue: *Smithereens* and *Acrobat*.

Here are the details.

Smithereens is a Medieval-era game in which you and an opponent must catapult enormous boulders at one another's fortresses. This is one of Odyssey's Voice games, adding the shouts of the soldiers to the terrifying thunder of the projectiles as they swarm across the screen.

Acrobat is slightly more sedate, though no less challenging. You must jump one figure from the circus platform to the seesaw, thus hurtling the other acrobat into the air. The object is to pop as many balloons as possible. There are eighteen game variations in this new Voice cartridge.

Another company which you've read about in our pages, Spectravision, has also been busy. The company recently released its first computer games, all of which are compatible to the Commodore VIC-20 computer.

The games are *Cave In*, the object being to dig furiously from beneath the rubble of a collapsed mineshaft; *Number Crunch*, an educational math game for kids; and *Reagonomics*, in which the player is in charge of America's Gross National Product.

Each of the Spectravision keyboard games is in full color and retails for $35.00 each.

A HOT ONE

Reaganomics may be topical, but it isn't as controversial as an "inflammatory" new videogame which recently succeeded in raising the hackles of national fire-prevention organizations, simultaneously prompting questions about the videogaming industry's capacity for responsible self-regulation.

At the center of the

controversy is Apple-compatible *Firebug,* the brainchild of Silas S. Warner, creator of the popular computer games *Robot War* and *Castle Wolfenstein.*

Firebug is essentially a five-level maze game in which the player navigates a "bug" through a labyrinth dotted with blue markers which, when "knocked over" by the passing bug, initiate the spreading destruction of the maze. The player must thereafter avoid the disintegrating portions of the maze while attempting to complete a run ahead of a preselected time limit. Once the limit is exceeded, the trail left behind the bug begins "burning" forward like a fuse, threatening to catch and consume the bug.

Such a simple, fairly abstract scenario might not have elicited heat from fire-fighting professionals had Muse Software, the Baltimore, Maryland, distributor of *Firebug,* not made several questionable choices in its marketing strategy for the game.

Choice Number 1: the name. *Webster's* Dictionary defines a "firebug" as someone subject to "an irresistible impulse to start fires," hardly the sort of character a local fire official would find endearing.

Choice Number 2: the advertising. With its portrait of wild-eyed individual racing through a flaming corridor, Muse's original ad copy did nothing to allay perceptions of *Firebug* as a glorification of pyromania.

Choice Number 3: the game's documentation and display formats. Written instructions accompanying each game posed burning questions like:

"How good are you at setting fires? Think you can run through a building, pick up and drop gas cans to set it ablaze, and get out alive? Will your score for the fire be good enough to get you on the Great Scores List?"

The blue markers were identified as the "gas cans," and the ruin they triggered was accompanied by crackling sound effects. The video displays for the game ran in the same vein, greeting the player with bon mots like "Have a Nice Fire."

Still, the folks at Muse felt they had in *Firebug* a comparatively innocuous product, particularly when stacked up against the likes of such computer games as *Nuclear War* and *Conflict.*

"Nobody gets shot, eaten, or bombed," says Muse president Peter Varvaris. "There's just nothing offensive here."

Nevertheless, shortly after *Firebug's* May release, Muse began receiving negative comments from those who found the game's incendiary overtones objectionable. The flames of discontent were fanned when a newsletter published by a division of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI) reprinted the *Firebug* instructions, sans additional description of the game itself, along with the call for a letter-writing campaign directed at Muse. Before long, other professional organizations, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs, has joined the fray.

But even before the ISFSI newsletter appeared, Muse had taken steps to blunt the attack and bolster its own image as (in the words of Rhoda Uretzky-Miller, Muse's marketing director) a "responsible manufacturer of software." In June, Muse officially "re-released" the game, using the same name and identical display formats, but with instructions that omitted direct references to an arson theme. ("Can you succeed at a test of fire?" replaced "How good are you at setting fires?")

Muse's advertising followed suit, highlighting a stylized representation of an actual *Firebug* display in lieu of a madman tipping over gas cans in a burning building.

The dispute between Muse and its critics has evolved into an uneasy standoff each side expressing disappointment with the other's behavior.

"We're being persecuted by people who've never even seen, let alone played, the game," complains Muse's Varvaris. If society's watchdogs are going after *Firebug* as excessively violent, he asserts, "you might as well throw all of Atari's games away, too."

For his part, Maryland country fire marshal James Dalton, who played a role in getting the original *Firebug* instructions into the ISFSI newsletter, doesn't buy the argument that *Firebug* is a veritable shrinking violet in a videogame world populated by frenetic, often violent fantasies.

"I just don't see why we have to deal with a game where people play with fire," says Dalton. "Arson is a crime of violence against *people,*" he emphasizes, "and we must educate the public to this fact."

While Dalton welcomes Muse's current reconsideration of its choice of *Firebug* for the game's title, he feels a change of label would not go far enough. Instead, Dalton want a nationwide recall of all *Firebug* games and, short of removing the game from the market altogether, a full-scale revamping of its formats and instructions to eliminate any reference to the setting of fires.

However, according to Muse's Uretzky-Miller, a recall is not in the cards. "Our effort now is directed to educating the public on what *Firebug* is really about, not to recalling the game.

Both sides, then, profess to a goal of educating consumers, but the question remains — educate them to *what?*▲

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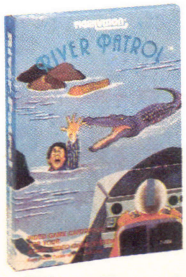
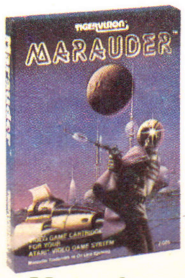
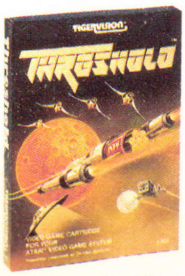


River Patrol



Marauder



Threshold

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You don't know how lucky you are.

Pity the poor book reviewer. Not only do they have to plow through mountains of litter to find a gem or two, they have to suffer publishers' press releases.

Press releases are odious little documents, usually a page or two in length, which tell you a) why the book in question is brilliant, b) why the author wrote it, and c) when it's being published and what the price will be.

Taking these in turn: a) one presumes that the book is worthy or it would not have been commissioned, b) who *cares* why the author wrote the book, a matter of profound insignificance. The work is — or if it isn't, *should* be — its own spokesperson. Everything you need to know about it is contained within the covers, except for c), which is the only worthwhile bit of information one gleans from press releases.

What has inspired this tirade is a press release we received from Creative Computing regarding a book they have published entitled — yes, here comes another one — *Guide to the Video Arcade Games.* Lend an ear to the managing editor's rasher of bacon: "This is the definitive book for both beginning and professional gamers. It supplies the reader with tips on how to get started and be successful in the competitive world of the arcades, and also gives detailed (sic — they're pathetically sketchy) descriptions on how to increase scores and get the most out of those quarters."

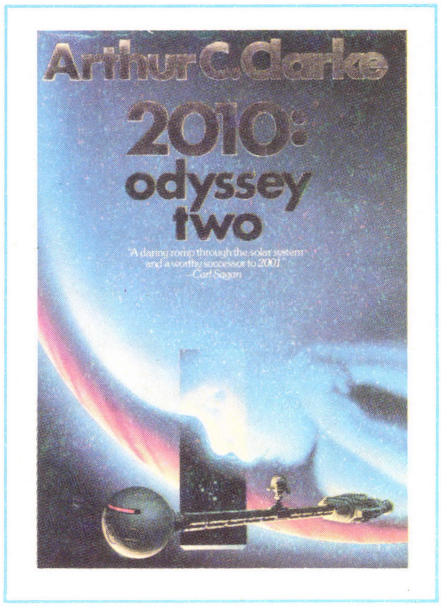
How original! What a great idea! Why didn't anyone *else* think of doing a book like that?

What's disturbing about this release is not that the book was published — though seeing yet another videogame book is cause to commit seppuku — but the attitude of the inventive, future-oriented people at Creative Computing.

Creative Computing is as fine a magazine on the subject as one can ask for, and the software division produces an excellent product (see this issue's *Computereyes).* Yet, they have compromised their integrity by trying to tell us that trash is gold, that their 111 page "pamphlet" — a woefully inadequate volume, but that's beside the point — is a bargain at $3.95. Even among the scoria this is far from choice reading.

The book is a permanent record that Creative Computing wants to make money, which is not an unreasonable goal. But the press release is a permanent record that not only is Creative Computing *content,* actually *satisfied* to peddle a demonstrably inferior product, but they are not averse to calling it "definitive."

Well, one must tell oneself, *if Lord Olivier can justify acting in TV commercials, Creative Computing must be allowed its lapses.*



FICTION LESS STRANGE THAN FACT

Forget, for a moment, that there are works which make one wish that Gutenberg had elected to be a plumber. Once in a while, this reckless industry manages to produce a few worthy books.

Two works of fiction which deserve a wide audience, and not just among videogamers, are Arthur C. Clarke's *2010: Odyssey Two* and the new series of adventures by Vladimir Koziakin entitled "Amazeman Books."

First, the fluff.

Amazeman is a technological hero, one who has to wrestle with thirty-seven graphic problems each volume. Each has its own maze to negotiate, with answers thoughtfully provided in the back of the book.

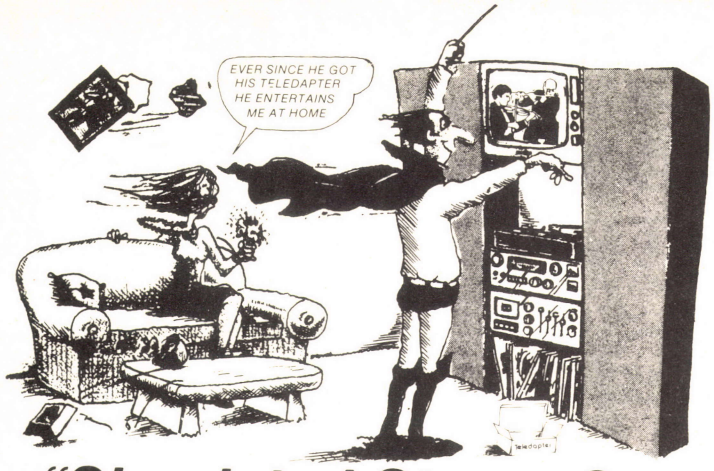
We're not talking literature here; nonetheless, maze-buffs will find the book a lot of fun, and the union of pictorial and narrative qualities is commendable, particularly if little Johnny or Jill doesn't much like to read. Which is not to say that this is a series for kids alone: Koziakin is clever enough to layer on many adult touches.

Avon released the first paperback last month, with two more scheduled for early in the new year.

Mr. Clarke's opus is considerably more ambitious. For those of you who may have been working in a salt mine for the last fifteen years, Clarke's short story "The Sentinel" was adapted into a screenplay by Clarke and director Stanley Kubrick in 1964. Four years later, Kubrick released *2001: A Space Odyssey,* the finest science fiction film ever made. Bar none. Clarke's novelization of the film remains one of the best-selling science fiction novels in industry history.

2010: Odyssey Two — which was, incidentally, written by Clarke on a computer — is set onboard the spaceship Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov, as spacefarers struggle to unravel the mysteries of the starchild and the alien race which created it in the closing moments of *2001: A Space Odyssey.*

Clarke does not write stirring prose, his style more functional than crafted. But he *does* know how to create a credible, futuristic world, and his scientific concepts are, in a word, brilliant. Videogame fans will find Clarke's use of computers *most* ingenious. Published last month by Del Rey, this 320 page opus sells for $14.95.▲



2 WAYS*

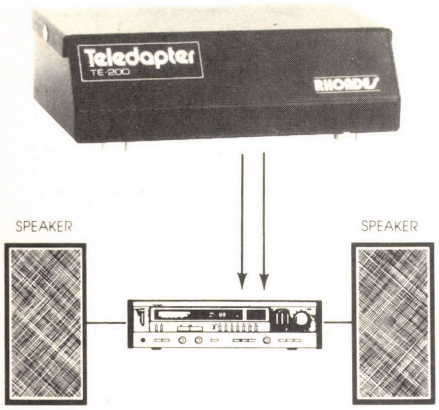
TO MAKE YOUR TV SOUND LIKE A STEREO MOVIE THEATRE!

1. TELEDAPTER®
   The TV to Stereo Sound Adapter
2. TELE-AMP™
   The TV Audio Power Amp

"Simulated Stereo Sound From Your TV, So Real, You Will Think You Are There"

*WAY NO. 1

is to use your present stereo or receiver system connected to your TV via our TV to Stereo Adapter.

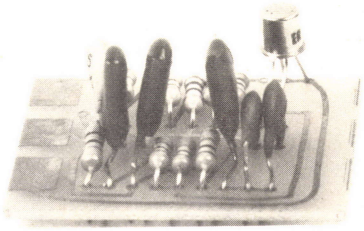


TELEDAPTER®

The Teledapter is an interface device that connects in between the TV and stereo. However to do this, the Teledapter performs three important functions, first, it provides chassis isolation, for protection of the stereo, when used with TV's that have hot chassis. Second, Teledapter matches the impedance mismatch between a TV's output and that of a stereo input. Thirdly, but hardly the least, it gives a simulated stereo effect, not just mono out both stereo speakers, but actually simulated stereo, a different signal for both the right and left inputs on the stereo.

Works on all TV's, every TV program, even video tape's, and pay TV channels. Since it works with your TV, all channel switching and volume changes are made automatically when you use your remote control or regular TV controls.

This is all done with quality electronics combined and engineered into the unique circuit board.



HOW IT CONNECTS

The Teledapter will work with any TV and any stereo system that has auxillary, tuner, or tape inputs. The Teledapter itself should be located near your stereo. A cable supplied with the unit plugs into the input of the Teledapter and goes to the TV or VCR where it is plugged into an earphone jack, an audio output, or can be alligator clipped directly on the TV's speaker terminals. The outputs of the Teledapter (left and right) plug directly into your stereo amp or receiver, with cables also supplied.

If you have a stereo, then the Teledapter is all you need. Order model TE•200 $39.95 plus 3.00 shipping.

THE SOUND

Words are hard pressed to describe the sound of a car on TV squealing around a corner, appearing to move from one side of the living room to the other. Or the crowd at a ball game, the crack of the bat, the whistles, as though you were on the playing field. And musicals, the pounding of the drums, the tingling of the cymbals, all coming from different locations.

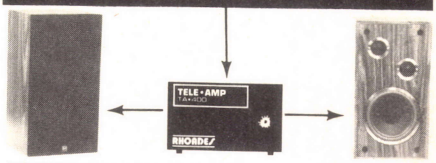
WORTHY COMMENTS

TV GUIDE . . . "The Rhoades TELEDAPTER is a steal at $39.95 . . . the results are excellent"

HOME VIDEO MAGAZINE . . . "you immediately get a sense of spaciousness—just what stereo's all about. It works!". . . "If we had to pick a single winner, we'd have to choose the TELEDAPTER. It's inexpensive, its flexible and it works."

*WAY NO. 2

If you don't want to use your stereo or don't have one. Then our combination Teledapter and power stereo amp is the answer.



TELE•AMP The Tele•Amp has all the same circuity as the Teledapter plus a stereo power amplifier built right into one neat little package. (size 2¼"H x 3½"W x 6"D) It connects to your TV or VCR just like the Teledapter, and then to any pair of speakers you might have or our recommended speakers below. Completely eliminates the need for a separate stereo system. Order model TA•400 $99.95 plus $5.00 shipping.

SPEAKERS Speakers measure 20"H x 9"D x 11"W rated at 20 watts each, two way system, 8" woofers, super tweeter, beautiful simulated walnut cabinets. There are less expensive speakers, but none that perform and look like these at this price. Order Model TB•6000 pair $119.00 plus $5.00 shipping.

GUARANTEE & WARRANTY*

Try any of our products in your home for 30 days. If you are not completely satisfied, return it for an immediate refund.

*Two years parts and labor

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[WRITE FOR COMPLETE CATALOG]

you Read it Here First!

Hooking into the old VCS of imagination, here are a few more Videogames We'd Like To See.
"What a thrill," you may yawn.
"Break out the No-Doze," some may groan.
"Trade ya my *Videogaming Illustrated* for the latest *Archie,*" others may grumble.
We'll grant that it's more fun to play *real* games than to read about nonexistent ones, but consider this:
1. Poking about in untested waters can be fun.
2. We *may* get your juices flowing sufficiently to send you to a personal computer for some game programming.
3. It gives us an excuse to run some nifty artwork.
For the uninitiated, what we've done is come up with twenty game ideas, submitted them to videogame buffs across the nation, and asked them to vote on their favorites.
The results are published for your amusement.

Ant Eater

You used to be a contented, peaceful aardvark roaming the deserts of New Mexico. Then that nasty mushroom cloud darkened the horizon and you metamorphosed into a new breed of ant eater.

Small enough to enter the ant colony itself, you must enter the tunnel and flick your radioactive tongue at the ants you encounter. Making your way through the maze, you search for the queen.

If you're not quick enough, the ants build dirt walls which you must pause to claw down. If you're *really* slow, the queen's eggs are going to hatch and you've got a whole new army with which to deal.

Frosty

Your job is to finish building Frosty before time slips away.

Decked out in mittens and snowsuit, your video figure must roll three big balls of snow and, climbing onto a milk crate, stack them one atop the other. That accomplished, you must finish your snowperson by adding charcoal features and a stovepipe hat.

But wait! The sun is rising higher on the horizon, melting the snow. And every now and then, the neighborhood bully sprays your egg crate with a hose. The water freezes, making it too slippery to climb.

The only way to keep your nemesis away is by pelting the turkey with snowballs — though that lessens your supply and makes completing Frosty that much more difficult.

Playground Action

If *Frosty* is a bit too chilly for you, give this kid's game a try.

The screen scrolls horizontally as you run a child through a park playground. The object is to go on every piece of equipment.

Start on the slide: up the ladder and down the chute, jumping over the sandpit to the swings. Into the seat, then leap off, over the heads of the kids playing marbles in front of you.

Next, it's up and over the monkey bars, then through a field where Frisbees fly high and low. The course repeats with variations.

Three skinned knees and you're out.

Cinema 1, 2, 3

How good a projectionist are *you?*

You're up in the booth of the latest mini-theatre, where you're responsible for running three movies simultaneously.

The view is looking into the projection booth, a cone of light spilling from the projection as the first movie flickers toward its tiny screen. You load the reel onto the second, start it, and move on to the third.

By that time, the first reel needs changing and — uh oh! The film has broken on reel three! A timer appears at the bottom of the screen. You've got ten seconds to finish with reel one and splice reel three before the broken film hits the film gate.

That's when the bulb starts to flicker on projector number two. And the sound threatens to go off on reel three.

Different problems offer different point values, adding to your score if you repair the breakdown in time, detracting from your score if you fail.

The game ends when tomatoes start flying from the audience.

There Goes $79.95

A slice of life game.

You've rented a videocassette of the hottest movie around — and your tape machine has decided to chew it up.

The screen looks down at the mess of tape threaded through the tape player's inner mechanisms. Each time you start the game, the tangle has taken a different course.

Your job, Mr. Phelps: use the cursor to release gears and switches and get the tape out, unbroken.

A new length of tape is thrust into the machine every sixty seconds. After ten minutes, you're buying the ruined cassette. ▲

GARY LARSEN THOUGHT HE HAD ALL THE ANSWERS.

Gary had an IQ of 162. He never got anything less than an "A" on his report card. He was a wiz at chess.

Then it happened.

Gary plugged Imagic's Riddle of the Sphinx™ into his Atari® Video Computer System™.

As Gary slowly, carefully made his way across Egypt's mysterious Valley of the Kings, he was attacked by rock-throwing thieves, plagued by scorpions, and tortured by thirst.

Yet he went on.

After passing the Sphinx, the Temple of Isis, the Great Pyramids, he reached the Temple of Ra where he presented all his treasures.

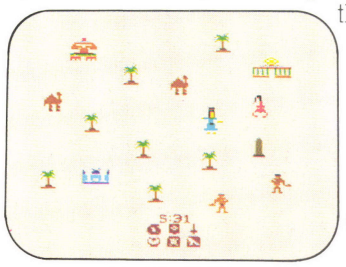
Unfortunately, he did not have the correct offering. Ra was not satisfied. Gary had to go back and try again.

And again. And again. And again. And again. And again. And again.

Here you see Gary as he is today. A veggie. Zonked out. Totally.

This is a warning. Imagic games are created by experts *for experts*. Do not try to solve the Riddle of the Sphinx if your IQ is equal to or less than your belt size.

After all, a brain is a terrible thing to fry.



For Atari® VCS.

IMAGIC

Created by experts for experts.

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THE ONLY VIDEO GAME VOICE MODULE WITH AN UNLIMITED VOCABULARY.

The Voice from Odyssey² adds a whole new dimension to the fun of video games. With this optional module and its specially programmed cartridges, Odyssey² becomes the only video game system that can repeat any words typed into the keyboard, and much more!

Depending upon which cartridge you insert, The Voice can do a whole bunch of other exciting things. Like asking questions and demanding answers to math and spelling problems. It even enhances sound effects and warns of approaching enemies in certain arcade games!

A whole series of specialized arcade, educational and strategy voice cartridges is available for use with The Voice, with a lot more to come. But you can still play all other Odyssey video games through The Voice module.

So if you're on the lookout for greater challenge, listen to The Voice, from Odyssey.² The fun you will have will speak for itself. For your nearest dealer call (800) 447-2882. In Illinois call (800) 322-4400.

ODYSSEY²

The keyboard is the key to greater challenge.

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